

Where 'Nuclear' Is Nice ■ The Allbritton Treatment ■ Woes of Newsroom Couples

COLUMBIA

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JOURNALISM REVIEW

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Good people



Helper of the handicapped. Ad Demmers of Holland helps handicapped children and their parents.

Rescuer. In Germany, Alfons Thomann works as an unpaid volunteer diver for the Bavarian Red Cross when underwater catastrophes occur.



On-the-spot Samaritan. As a volunteer for the Milwaukee Red Cross, Dale Clark brings his emergency van right to the scene to aid victims of fires and other disasters.



Nature preserver. Erwin Kaempf volunteers 15 to 20 hours a week as an auxiliary gamekeeper in Neuchatel, Switzerland.



Life saver. Barbara Skolaut saves lives and property for the Manchester (Virginia) Volunteer Fire Department.

Home providers. Mike Gay and his wife Anita thought about adoption, decided they could help more children by volunteering to provide a foster home for Houston's homeless children.



Church worker. Eddie Fox joined the choir, now works seven days a week as a church services volunteer in Manhattan.

Fund raiser. Irene Pitcock gives her time to the American Legion Ladies Auxiliary in Louisville raising funds through bake sales, picnics and bingo games for hospitals, handicapped children, the blind, the needy.



Teenagers' friend. Joyce Cranon works with disadvantaged youngsters in St. Louis, Mo. to help the teenagers realize their full potential.

Beauty restorer. Nora Kennington works to restore neglected gardens in N.Y.'s Central Park.

Food provider. Manuel Jaquez helped found a cooperative supermarket that provides his Dominican Republic community with quality food at reasonable prices.



do good things.



MS angels. In Melbourne, Australia, Shirley Delamott, Pat Kein and Heilige Grieve raised over \$6,000 for the Multiple Sclerosis Society with picnics, a movie and supper evening, plant and recipe book sales and raffles.



Animal protector. Last year Debbie Goik helped over 100 injured or neglected animals as a volunteer for the Humane Society in Livingston, Michigan.



Soapbox safety teacher. Alan Lane helped organize a soapbox derby association in Fulton, N.Y. to teach kids safe driving from the ground up.

Aid organizer. S.K. Patankar donates his time to the Bombay Lions Club to help raise funds and organize aid to the elderly, handicapped and blind.



The good people you see at left are (as they would be the first to tell you) just a sampling of the thousands of people within our Philip Morris family who work as volunteers in our hometowns around the world.

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“To assess the performance of journalism in all its forms, to call attention to its shortcomings and strengths, and to help define — or redefine — standards of honest, responsible service . . . to help stimulate continuing improvement in the profession and to speak out for what is right, fair, and decent”

—Excerpt from the *Review's* founding editorial, Autumn 1961

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CHRONICLE

The secret life of Pham Xuan An

When *The Wall Street Journal* published a highly critical editorial on American press coverage of El Salvador last February (see "A Political Press?" page 20), it alluded to reporting on the Vietnam War and "the difficulties of establishing the 'truth' " there. As evidence, the *Journal* reprinted on its editorial page a nearly year-old column by syndicated columnist and former Vietnam correspondent Stanley Karnow describing a return visit to that country. Headlined APPEARANCES AND REALITY: A VIETNAM POSTSCRIPT, the column mentioned the case of Pham Xuan An, a *Time* correspondent for a decade and a friend of Karnow's and of many other American correspondents in Vietnam. Though Karnow's efforts to meet with An were rebuffed, the column reported, he did manage to learn that An was now a senior official in the Vietnam government and, in fact, had been a member of the Viet Cong while a *Time* reporter.

In 1980, another former Vietnam correspondent returning there had actually been able to meet with An, who acknowledged that he had indeed been a lieutenant colonel in the National Liberation Front and was proclaimed a national hero in 1976 — the same year his name was removed from *Time*'s masthead.

Since these disclosures, there has been considerable speculation about whether An was working as a communist infiltrator of the American press corps. Arnaud de Borchgrave, former *Newsweek* chief of foreign correspondents, called him a "disinformation agent" last year in testimony before Senator Jeremiah Denton's subcommittee on security and terrorism. And Midge Decter, director of the Committee for the Free World, cited An in the same context in her newsletter "Contentions." As de Borchgrave sees it, An's is not an isolated case, but simple evidence of a communist effort to "disinform" the Western press.

Yet, much about Pham Xuan An remains a mystery. Was he a witting agent and spy, or simply a dedicated journalist motivated by a deeply felt nationalism? And, if an agent of some sort, what effect did An have on *Time*'s reporting of the war?

Like many local journalists who ultimately

join the ranks of foreign news organizations, An began his career as an interpreter and guide, working as a stringer for Reuters and *The Christian Science Monitor* in the late 1950s and early 1960s. A slight, self-effacing man whose chain-smoking and gauntness masked tremendous physical stamina, An had the look of an ascetic and the air of an educated aristocrat. Fluent in both French and English, he soon earned the respect of foreign reporters in Saigon. In the mid-1960s, when *Time* set up a bureau in Saigon, chief Frank McCulloch hired An as a stringer. By the end of McCulloch's tenure in 1968, An's reputation for intelligence and precision had helped raise him to the rank of correspondent, despite the fact that he rarely, if ever, filed reports to New York. Over the next decade, An proved his value to eight successive *Time* bureau chiefs by providing everything from biographies of local politicians to the latest Vietnamese joke. He was often seen discussing the issues of the day at Saigon cafes frequented by reporters.

"He was the best Vietnamese journalist in Saigon," recalls Jonathan Z. Larsen, who was bureau chief in 1971, the year An's name first appeared on *Time*'s masthead. (It remained for the next five years.) "He was a kind of historian, full of lore. You would talk to An before you set off on a story — to get some names and background — then go do the reporting." Charles Mohr, *Time*'s Southeast Asia bureau chief in the early sixties, agrees: "He was the leading political reporter in Vietnam and knew everybody in political life in Saigon."

An also had impressive knowledge of communist tactics, as well as ready access to documents from the CIO (South Vietnam's intelligence agency), according to Robert Shaplen, who grew to be close friends with An during the fifteen years he covered Vietnam for *The New Yorker*. Stanley Karnow recalls that, when he returned to Vietnam for NBC News in 1973, An was able to provide him with a copy of the entire cease-fire agreement before it was released to the public.

Such impressive connections inevitably created suspicions among reporters that An was associated with the communists in some

way. But such a possibility did not particularly trouble correspondents in Saigon, where many residents worked both sides of the street in the simple hope of surviving. "I always had the feeling that he was working with the other side," says Roy Rowan, who covered the Vietnam War for *Time* from 1973 through the fall of Saigon in 1975. But, he is quick to add, "I think he was honest; he was telling the truth. His sympathies were just with the other side."

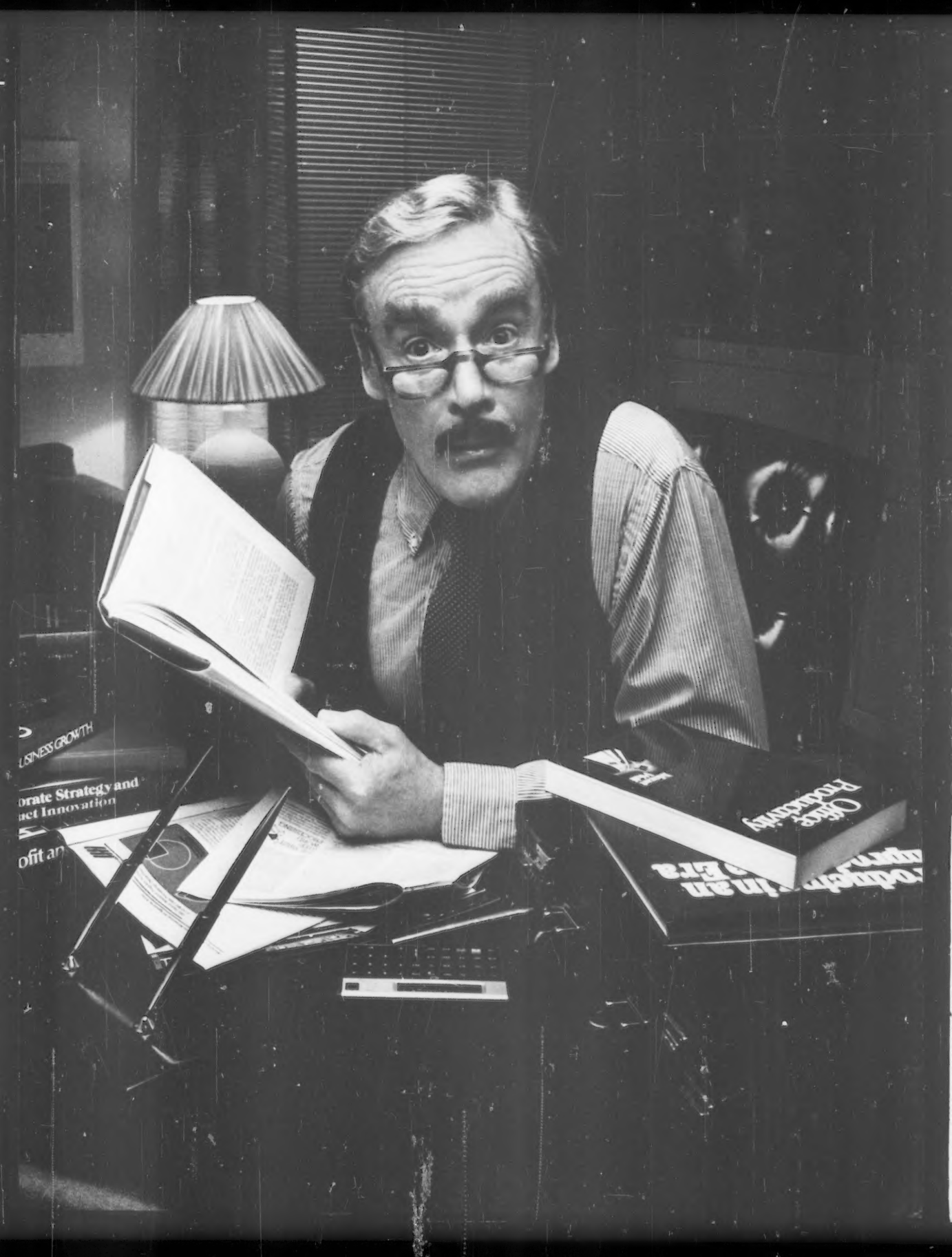
"An was scrupulously moral in the traditional Confucian ethic," says Douglas Pike, who served in Vietnam as a U.S. foreign service officer and was an early authority on the Viet Cong. Furthermore, says Pike, "This was not a black and white world. In his mind he may have been vacillating back and forth."

A passionate dissenter from the general belief in An's integrity is Arnaud de Borchgrave, who met An on his many trips to Saigon for *Newsweek*. De Borchgrave believes An was one of many agents who sought to distort American coverage of the war. "An was good at passing all sorts of

Pham Xuan An in Saigon:
Disinformant — or scrupulous Confucian?



Lo Minh



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tips to the press in Saigon," says de Borchgrave. "How could anyone have known [they were being duped]? Every journalist has been taken in at one time or another, and yet people still claim that disinformation doesn't exist."

But Richard Duncan, *Time's* chief of correspondents, maintains that the *Time* system, whereby reports from correspondents are consolidated and rewritten in New York, "permits a cushioning and filtering against a person like An." As indirect evidence, he notes that many criticized *Time* for being sympathetic to the war long after most journalists had turned against it. Frank McCulloch says, "How much weight could An

have had in a file that was rewritten 200 times in New York? There's not one judgment in *Time* that could be traced back to An."

What, then, was An's purpose if he was in fact working for the other side? David Halberstam, who knew An during his stint in Vietnam for *The New York Times*, says that if An was working under cover, it was probably as "a good listening post — an unofficial ambassador — for the North Vietnamese, who had no diplomatic relations with the West." He adds: "As far as negative sources are concerned, God knows we had hundreds of American field officers who were more convincing than An."

An's current situation is as much a subject of conjecture as his past. Rumors have surfaced in the Vietnamese community in the U.S. that An is deputy mayor of Ho Chi Minh City or an officer in the ministry of the interior, and that he rides around the city in a large limousine. One former correspondent even heard that An was soon to arrive in the United States as Vietnam's representative to the United Nations. Another got word that An has turned against the communists and is desperate to leave Vietnam.

Laurence Zuckerman

Laurence Zuckerman, a former *CJR* intern, is assistant editor of *View* magazine.

Stirring things up in Polo, Mo.

The office of *The Polo* (Missouri) *News* looks like anything but a newsroom. It houses a TV repair shop, a dry-cleaning service, and a real-estate business — all owned by the publisher. Throughout the day, local residents stop by to drop off their TV sets or soiled clothes. Wedged in among the TV diagnostic equipment are two antique Frieden Justowriters, which make up the production department of the weekly newspaper serving this unpaved town of 583, about forty miles northeast of Kansas City.

In recent months, however, the visitors to the small white building on Main Street have included reporters from major Missouri dailies, smaller area papers, and TV and radio stations. The *News* has received the support of the Kansas City Press Club and an offer of legal help from the Kansas City Star Company. The paper has even prepared a thirty-page handout for visiting reporters.

The object of all this interest is a battle between the publisher of the *News*, Jim Carroll, and the five-member Polo City Council. With his wife Dianna, Carroll has done everything possible to cover council meetings, while the publicity-shy council has done everything it can to stop him. The result has been a *News* lawsuit asking that the council be prevented from closing its meetings, in violation of state law, and from banning tape recorders. The suit is expected to go to trial this spring.

The paper is not much older than the dispute. Polo had been without a real newspaper since the 1940s, relying on nearby weeklies for community news. Then TV repairman Jim Carroll started an Optimist Club in Polo and began putting out a club bulletin. Encouraged by local residents to start a bona fide paper, the Carrolls produced the first

issue of *The Polo News* on April 2, 1981.

"Basically, we are television technicians," says Dianna Carroll. "We didn't know what we were doing. But everybody said they sure liked the paper, so we kept on doing it."

The first few issues of the twelve-to-sixteen-page tabloid stuck by and large to high school sports, obits, birth notices, gags, and chatty social notes from correspondents in nearby towns. Then, in July, the paper began to get more serious, raising questions about a CETA employee who had resigned in a dispute with the city council and about the seemingly selective enforcement of parking ordinances. Responding angrily at its next meeting, the council, says Jim Carroll, reprimanded the paper and attempted to go into closed session. When Carroll refused to leave, the council — which includes a semi-trailer repairman, a retired butcher, a pastor, and a railroad signalman — adjourned the meeting.

A few days later, Carroll recalls, the *News* received a check for some official city notices that the paper had run — an expenditure that should have been approved at the council meeting. It made Carroll wonder what other kinds of business were being transacted behind closed doors. "Did the council commit a crime by holding an unannounced meeting last Friday evening, August 7, 1981?" he asked in an editorial.

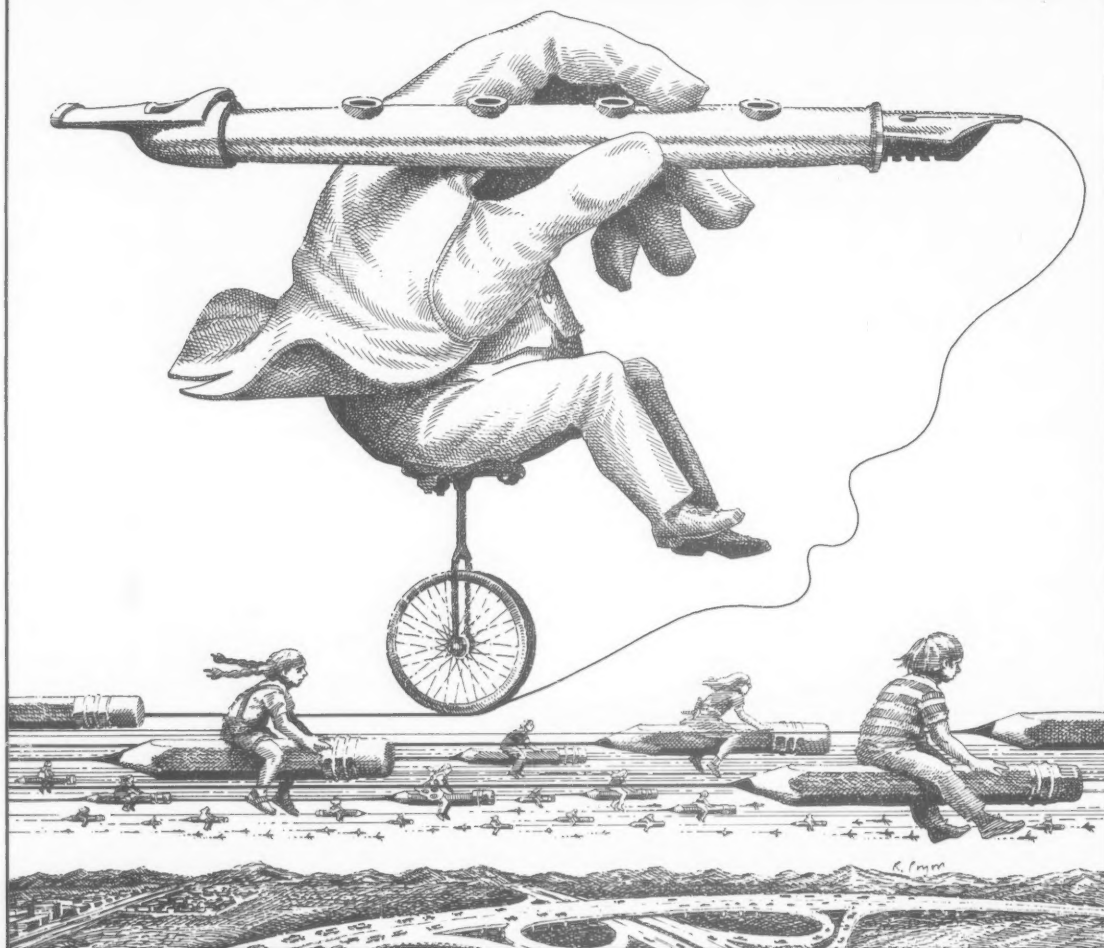
As the confrontation went on, Carroll began taking a tape recorder to meetings to show what the council was and was not doing; then, on August 17, the council voted to prohibit all recorders from city hall. Carroll complied, but continued to level editorial barrages against the council. Finally, in early October, Carroll refused to remove his re-

corder. The council immediately adjourned the meeting, whereupon several fistfights broke out on the street outside.

Carroll responded in a sharp editorial: "Of course, there are those who don't like to be recorded, like the Mayor of Polo who conducts the city's business behind closed doors and produces minutes to suit the situation, and alderman 'Boss Hog' who threatens to knock a news reporter in the head with a club. These guys don't need to be on the city council, they need to be in a 'cage.' The mayor told a group last Wednesday evening the reason he didn't like my recorder is that it is disturbing. I use bad tape and I didn't

Mini-conglomerate: Dianna and Jim Carroll run a dry-cleaning shop, sell real estate, repair TV sets, and put out a hell-raising weekly paper.





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know how to run it. Hey! What about now, I changed tape and learned how to run it. He still doesn't like it. The policeman's scanner makes more noise than my recorder. . . . A heck of a way to run a town."

Eleven days later, Carroll filed suit, asking the Circuit Court for an injunction against the council's recorder ban. The action drew a large crowd to the next meeting, including numerous reporters from around the state — most of whom carried tape recorders. The council members took one look around the jammed chamber and temporarily adjourned the meeting. After forty minutes of deliberating, the council let the crowd — and the recorders — back in.

It proved to be a hollow victory. At subsequent sessions, council members frustrated the recorders by whispering behind sheets of paper or banging metal chairs on the floor. Carroll refused to drop his suit, prompting the council to offer a compromise: it would allow recorders into public meetings, but the "day-to-day operation and administration of the city" would be exempt from the state's open meetings law. Carroll rejected the deal.

Although the state sunshine law clearly applies to almost all daily operations of public bodies, the council members profess bewilderment at Carroll's stance. "Look," says Mayor Larry Gregory, the railroad signalman, "if the water plant breaks down, and three or four of us have to run down to take a look, well, we can't call a special meeting just for that. That's all we were saying." Gregory claims Carroll "cooked up" the entire issue simply to "have fun and sell a few papers, which he's doing. He's the kind of guy who likes to take a stick and go behind the outhouse and poke around with it." The controversy has, in fact, raised circulation to over 900.

Gregory has decided not to run for reelection this spring. Carroll says he thinks the town is tired of all the bad publicity and will elect a new majority, which, he says, would probably make the whole issue moot. Even then, however, he says he would pursue the case in order to make the city pay his legal fees and to prevent a similar situation from occurring in the future.

Jim Carroll modestly takes credit for raising the town's political consciousness, but adds, "I'll be glad when it's over." Dianna Carroll agrees. "It'll be good covering ball games again," she says, sighing. "Did you know the girls made the state playoffs this year?"

David Firestone

David Firestone, former editor of Kansas City Magazine, is a reporter with the Dallas Times Herald.

Taking stock in Detroit

Ever since it was founded in 1873, the Evening News Association of Detroit has remained tightly controlled by the Scripps and Booth families. So, too, has financial information about its holdings, which include five television stations, two radio stations, two publishing companies, and eight newspapers, the flagship of which is the *Detroit News*. The local unit of The Newspaper Guild at the *News* has been frustrated for years in its attempts to ferret out details about ENA's profits and general financial condition. Now, however, through a freak chance, sixty *News* employees have come into company stock — giving them access to previously off-limits shareholders' meetings.

As a privately held company, ENA does not have to publish its earnings or other financial data; only shareholders can make any claim on such information. Last fall, one of those shareholders — a grandson interested in cashing in his inheritance, by some accounts, or a non-family stockholder, according to others — turned over seventy-five shares to local broker John Leadford for sale. After months of trying without success to unload them, in mid-January Leadford mentioned the stock to a friend, Douglas Ilka, who happens to be chairman of the *News*'s guild unit, and he jumped at the chance to buy some of it.

Ilka told some colleagues of the opportunity, and word spread swiftly through the *News*'s newsroom. Though he had originally planned to take a seven-day option on the purchase, Ilka feared that the commotion among reporters might reach corporate ears and enable executives to head off the stratagem, so he bought all seventy-five shares on the spot, paying \$175 a share. So many fellow *News* employees were interested in joining in that purchases eventually had to be limited to guild members and to two shares per person. Sixty ultimately bought in, including reporters, photographers, copy editors, and two janitors.

"I was absolutely amazed at the response," says Ilka; the stock caper, he adds, was a "shot in the arm" for a city room in which morale had been low. Triumphant shareholders began talking of having their shares framed and of printing T-shirts depicting the stock certificate and proclaiming "Don't Tread on Me." Donald Kummer, administrative officer for the guild, says that company officials "have gone out of their way in the past to keep shares from going out of the family."

Evening News officials appear to be ac-

cepting the inevitable with good grace. "We look upon it as favorable," says James Clark, director of corporate communications; employees "are now learning more about the company they work for."

But such learning will not come easy, as employees discovered at ENA's annual shareholders' meeting last February 22. Ten of the sixty-five or so shareholders attending the session in Troy, Michigan, were guild members. When they asked for details about the *News*'s financial operations, they were given only consolidated figures for all ENA holdings. Guild members were shown a slide show containing some less accessible figures, but the numbers flashed by so quickly that there was no time to take them down. Still, says Kummer, "It was our first



glimpse of any figures. It's the first time anybody has had any idea of the amount of profits or even of the number of shares outstanding."

That number is 490,000, so the employees' seventy-five shares won't bring much voting strength. But Ilka says he hopes the purchase may lead to a "better working relationship" with management, which, he adds, "might open up the stock to others who want to buy it."

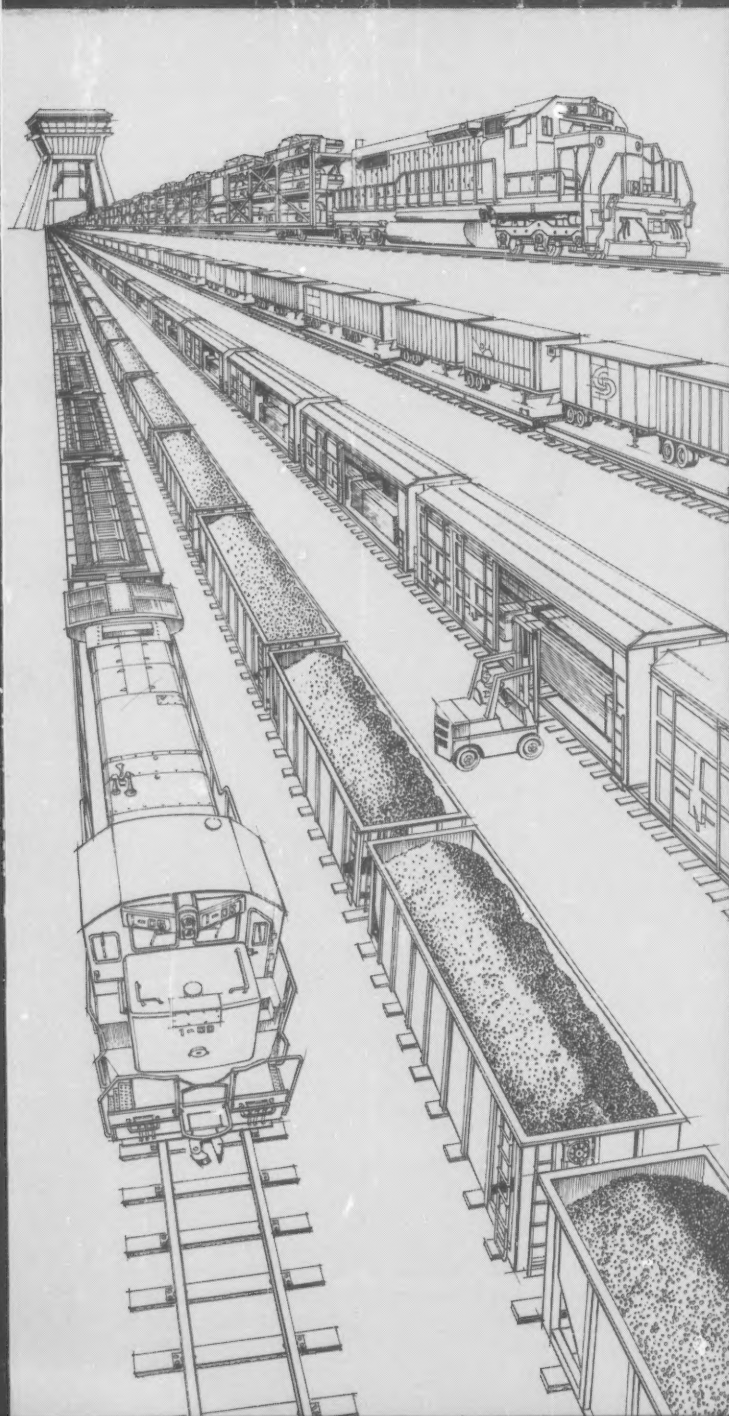
The guild, meanwhile, intends to press its new advantage. At the recent meeting, for instance, members were able to ask about reported problems in a new suburban printing plant. They were assured that the bugs were being worked out, but guild members say they are resolved to get a progress report at next year's shareholders' meeting. "We're going to ask some very pointed questions," says Kummer.

Kathleen Kerwin

Kathleen Kerwin is a reporter for the Chicago bureau of the *Commodity News Service*.

continued

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Philadelphia: rough around the edges

Ever since last August, when the Philadelphia *Bulletin* went public with its financial problems, the *Courier-Post* in nearby Cherry Hill, New Jersey, had been poised for action. So, says publisher Robert T. Collins, when the end came in late January, "We dusted off our game plan."

Thus, on Friday, January 29, as souvenir hunters queued up at the front door of the *Bulletin* building to buy the paper's final edition, workers at the loading docks in the back were readying piles of *Parade* magazines — ordered weeks in advance and bearing the *Bulletin* logo — to be trucked across the Delaware River to the *Courier-Post* plant. *Courier-Post* telephone solicitors had already begun calling some 700 people who had been identified in preceding months as potential subscribers should the *Bulletin* die.

By Saturday, more than 500 *Bulletin* delivery routes had been taken over by the *Courier-Post*, and over the weekend some 300 vending machines were set up at commuter stops in southern New Jersey and downtown Philadelphia. At the same time, the paper expanded its news hole by ten pages and added a Philadelphia page, primarily for the benefit of former *Bulletin* readers. By mid-March, claims publisher Collins, the paper had added 17,000 daily readers.

The *Courier-Post*'s go-get-'em strategy is by no means unique. In fact, if Knight-Ridder's Philadelphia *Inquirer* and Philadelphia *Daily News* assumed that the passing of their chief competitor would make life easy in the nation's fourth largest newspaper market, they were wrong. The *Bulletin* had 405,000 readers, and its demise has created a circulation free-for-all by the no-less-than sixteen suburban dailies that crowd the greater Philadelphia region known as the Delaware Valley.

The papers, which range from the tiny *Today's Spirit* in the Hatboro-Warminster area (circulation: 7,500) to the medium-sized *Courier-Post* (134,000), were at one time generally content with the niche carved out for them by their coverage of such local issues as municipal politics, school boards, and high school sports. In recent years, however, their pursuit of new readers has been relentless. "Some of them," says Eugene L. Roberts, Jr., executive editor of the *Inquirer*, "are more innovative, enterprising, and aggressive than the *Bulletin* [was] over the last decade" (but not including the last year, he adds). The new vigor of these papers, in fact, is viewed as having been a pri-

mary cause of the *Bulletin*'s death.

The tactics now being pursued by the papers vary from the silly to the sober, but are in almost all cases ambitious. The *Bucks County Courier Times* (circulation: 69,000) asked young readers to send in "Free Snoopy" cartoons to support the newspaper's effort to obtain rights to the "Peanuts" comic strip despite the *Inquirer*'s claims to exclusivity. Several papers have distributed many thousands of free copies in expensive "sampler" campaigns designed to win over former *Bulletin* readers. Others have lured *Bulletin* district circulation managers, who are valuable because they bring with them home-delivery carriers and their customers from old routes. Still other suburban papers have reacted by changing their publication schedules. For instance, *Today's Spirit* was converted from a morning to an afternoon broadsheet in part to attract former *Bulletin* readers.

In addition to such marketing ploys, virtually all suburban Philadelphia papers are making an effort to attract new readers by increasing their editorial content. Several have added such syndicated columnists as Jack Anderson, Mike Royko, and others not monopolized by the *Inquirer*. More significantly, many papers, like the Camden *Courier-Post*, have increased their news holes. To cite one example, The Gloucester County *Times* in New Jersey has added eighteen columns a day for international, national, and sports news, plus a local business page.

Some editorial changes have been more radical and longer in the making. The six-day-a-week *Delaware County Daily Times* began to plan for the *Bulletin*'s close a full three years ago. Last summer, partly in anticipation of the end, the paper shifted from an afternoon broadsheet to a morning tabloid, lowered its price from twenty-five to ten cents, and began serving up a Rupert Murdoch-inspired amalgam of sensation and sports. (Sample front-page headline, from March 1: GOD VISITED THE WHITE HOUSE, on a story about Lyndon Johnson's claim that he was paid a visit by the Holy Ghost during the Vietnam War.)

Publisher H. L. "Sandy" Schwartz III says that "as we watched the *Bulletin*, *Inquirer*, and *Daily News* lose circulation, and as we couldn't increase our circulation, we realized there must be something fundamentally wrong with what we were doing. So we decided on a morning tabloid with a different

approach to news — shorter stories and more of them." The paper has experimented further since the *Bulletin*'s folding, adding a Sunday edition, increasing the newsstand price to twenty cents, and mounting an intensified TV-and-radio ad campaign.

The *Inquirer* and *Daily News*, meanwhile, have been anything but passive observers of this activity. Both, in fact, are taking the battle to the suburban papers' home ground. The *Daily News*, a tabloid aimed mostly at blue-collar readers, has increased home delivery in Philadelphia's nearest suburbs. "There's a strong potential for a hefty increase in the suburbs," says editor F. Gilman Spencer. "We could sell out there on our sports coverage alone."

For its part, the *Inquirer* has been heavily promoting itself in the suburbs, with plans to test a weekly tabloid pullout containing suburban news. It has also assigned some twenty reporters to the suburbs since the *Bulletin*'s closing. That move has made some area dailies nervous. The *Inquirer*, says *Courier Times* publisher Grover J. Friend, "is obviously out to get a monopoly on the whole Delaware Valley and choke out the suburban newspapers." The *Inquirer*'s Roberts replies that the Philadelphia market "has always been rough and obviously now it is rougher. It would be totally wrong to conclude there is no longer competition in the Philadelphia area."

Given the frenzy that has followed the *Bulletin*'s death, that assessment is hard to challenge with regard to marketing practices. Does it apply to editorial coverage as well? Edward J. Trayes, professor of communications at Temple University in Philadelphia, thinks so: "It's hard for a large metro paper like the *Inquirer* to compete on all the local turfs. When you consider the large area the *Inquirer* has to cover, and all the towns, it is not possible."

On the other hand, D. Herbert Lipson, publisher of Philadelphia magazine, maintains that "the suburban papers pose no editorial competition for the *Inquirer* and *Daily News*." Philadelphia, he says, is indeed "a one-newspaper town." The *Bulletin*'s closing, he says, "has been very traumatic for the city. It does leave a void and it's dangerous. There is one voice, one major medium. It's a monopoly situation."

David Diamond

David Diamond has written about Philadelphia business for *Business Week* and *The New York Times*.

VOLKSWAGEN

VOLKSWAGEN OF AMERICA, INC.

00001

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VOLKSWAGEN OF AMERICA			VOLKSWAGEN OF AMERICA	

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STEEL BELTED RADIAL TIRES (FIVE) P155/80 R 13
FOUR-WHEEL INDEPENDENT SUSPENSION
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UNITIZED BODY CONSTRUCTION
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CAPITAL LETTER

by C. T. HANSON

Neolabeling

Diligent journalists have uncovered a new trend in Washington and they have duly endowed it with a label of its own: "Neoliberalism."

The New Republic and *Washington Monthly* were the first to make noises about the birth of a stylish but tough-minded progressive movement for the eighties, a heady blend of conservative and liberal ideas. But it was *Esquire* that reported at length on the phenomenon in its February cover article, "The Neoliberal Club," thereby prompting a surge of daily press interest. Within days, the new label had appeared in the *Baltimore Evening Sun* and *The Denver Post* and on the society page of *The Washington Post*. *The Wall Street Journal* denounced the "emerging movement" as anti-capitalist in its February 19 lead editorial (HERE COME THE NEOLIBS). Press secretaries for neolib congressmen listed by *Esquire* began getting calls from reporters. And Senator Gary Hart of Colorado was invited to an on-the-record luncheon at *The Washington Post* on the strength of his standing (according to a *Post* editor) as the unannounced presidential candidate of the neoliberals.

Esquire's article came close on the heels of *Time* magazine cover stories about two other significant trends. *Time* reported that pregnancy has become a fashionable new pastime and that human beings, exceedingly fond of cats, have taken to keeping them as pets in their homes. But pregnant women and pet cats are much easier for reporters to identify than neoliberals; discovery of this political trend evidently took some serious digging by journalists with an eye for subtle distinctions.

How does the neoliberal movement differ from those other branches of liberalism set out by William Safire in his *Political Dictionary*: limousine, screaming, professional, bleeding-heart,

double-domed? "The difference is that the neoliberal movement doesn't exist," replied an aide to Senator Hart, who must remain anonymous.

Such disclaimers did not discourage Randall Rothenberg, author of the *Esquire* piece, who has a contract from Simon and Schuster to produce a book on neoliberals. "There is a new club . . ." he wrote. "The new zeitgeist everyone is shopping for, the first new political philosophy in fifty years . . . already exists."

According to Rothenberg, neoliberals in Congress are pragmatic, disdaining single-issue politics and political zealotry; they believe in a strong but lean and un wasteful military, in fiscally conservative government that eschews Great Society solutions while seeking to release America's entrepreneurial spirit from the chains of government regulation — but, of course, without abandoning compassion for the neediest.

Consider one politician on Capitol Hill who seems to fit the bill. He has denounced the intolerant ideologues of the New Right, and not long ago appeared with Jane Fonda on a television program intended to show that liberals, too, can be patriotic. In a recent Senate hearing he lambasted the Army for huge cost overruns involving a new attack helicopter. His economic views generally conform to the *Esquire* definition. I am referring to Senator Barry Goldwater, neoliberal.

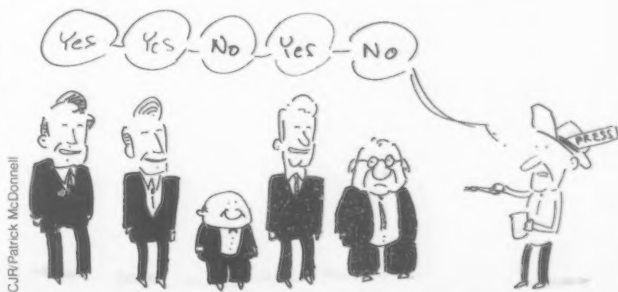
Goldwater, to be sure, is not on *Esquire's* list, which is confined to Democrats. But how about William Proxmire or John Glenn, or, for that matter, Jimmy Carter, all of whom would seem to fit the "ideological" criteria? None of these Democrats is on the list either.

The reason is that they are too old! "Neoliberal legislators are young . . ." according to Rothenberg. "[They] are children of the Fifties. . . . They are cool and dispassionate — Fifties virtues." Readers from Michigan might infer that the group includes their own Senator Carl Levin. At forty-seven, this Democrat seems to meet the age requirement (Hart is forty-four). And as a cost-conscious military reformer, Levin meets the political criteria. But, in fact, he is not on *Esquire's* list.

A possible explanation is that Levin is disheveled, balding, plump, perhaps the worst-dressed man in the Senate, and anything but glamorous. *Esquire*, that arbiter of male vogue, stipulates that neolib must be good-looking ("handsome Democratic upstarts who assert that they are the true political heirs of John Kennedy . . ."). This may also explain why the unglamorous young Democratic senators Joe Biden and Chris Dodd did not make the list. It certainly explains why Gary Hart and Representative Tim Wirth (both ruggedly handsome) and Bill Bradley (towering ex-sports celebrity) were chosen for the *Esquire* cover photo; and why all the seven other neolib legislators mentioned in the article are quite photogenic.

One can quite readily imagine a future *People* magazine cover: "The Neoliberals and Their Foxy Ladies."

Age and looks aside, however, the political differences between members of this sexy group overwhelm the



similarities. For instance, in assessing congressional voting records, Americans for Democratic Action gave neoliberal Representative Wirth an 85 percent approval rating in 1981 (100 percent being "perfect"). But non-neolib Representative Stephen Solarz (young New York Democrat) got an almost identical rating of 90 percent, while neoliberal Representative James Florio scored 40 percent.

The group's program, according to *Esquire*, calls for compulsory national service; better defense with cheaper, more reliable weapons; federalism that gives power to entire regions, rather than states; a negative income tax; and central economic planning to foster "hi-tech industrialization."

However, according to my survey of press secretaries, not one neoliberal on *Esquire*'s list supported all these supposed articles of faith. Some were opposed to or noncommittal toward half to three-quarters of the tenets. Neolib representative Philip Gephardt has decried "central economic planning" with nearly as much fervor as *The Wall Street Journal* displayed in attacking the neolibs, who appear unanimous only in their support of "better defense."

They do constitute a group of sorts: young Democrats who survived the Reagan landslide and who say they are seeking new ideas to revitalize their party. To date, they have not found many, but one shouldn't knock them for trying. Still, a better term for them than *Esquire*'s might be "the blow-dried survivors."

Journalists do love labels and we would be hard-pressed to get by without them. It is disturbing, however, when what appears to lurk behind a new label is the desire to promote glamour, personality, and the flashy image rather than to present information and ideas. Unfortunately, sex is what sells.

In all fairness, *The Washington Monthly* and *The New Republic* stress the supposedly new ideas of neoliberalism, not age or looks. Indeed, *The New Republic* claimed last October that Senator Pat Moynihan — that florid, irascible, and supposedly neoconservative intellectual — is actually a prominent neoliberal. This fact

alone suggests that neoliberalism is as slippery a concept as the Holy Roman Empire, an entity which at its fall was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire.

Be that as it may, *Esquire*'s sexier image of neoliberalism — an image that seems tailor-made for TV news — is what has caught the attention of the daily press. Let's hope that we in the daily press display a short attention span. It's been known to happen before.

The Tribune's class act

The best piece of journalism I've read in quite some time appeared in a recent issue of *The Washington Tribune*, a free, biweekly tabloid distributed in liquor stores and other outlets across town. I was not surprised at the high quality of the article, by contributing editor Charles Freund, because I have become a regular reader of the paper. The writing is consistently excellent. There are occasional local scoops, welcome alternatives to *Washington Post* film reviews, and frequent jabs at the capital's only daily newspaper.

At first glance, the Freund piece seemed only mildly promising. The headlines and photo captions indicated that it was about a conference in Silver Spring, Maryland, of Eastern-style mystics and believers in a new age of universal harmony. Yet what Freund actually produced was a sardonic, marvelously acute evocation of the late sixties, made eerie by the passage of time, and eerier by the revelation that so many sixties "space cadets," supposedly long gone, are still among us.

The 5,000-word article moves discursively from the world of L.A. street mystics, circa 1968, to the Silver Spring conference, and back for a closing vignette. Its subject is the last of Freund's many unplanned encounters with one Headband, a fatuous new-age guru who was about to leave town: "I blurted out, 'Have a good trip,' and winced because I knew what was coming next. He didn't disappoint me. Taking my hand in whatever the with-it handshake was that month, he assumed his big I-Know-Everything expression, which was, really, filled with friendship, and knowing perfectly well I

wasn't leaving for anyplace, said, 'Hey, you have a good trip, too, man.' . . . I felt a surge of relief that I'd never have to run into him again. Just then he said, 'We'll see each other again, man.' "

One does not find writing like this in the *Post* very often. This is one reason why the *Tribune*'s chief editor, Mark Jenkins, and its backers (mainly local businessmen) are hopeful that the ad-thin paper will soon catch on enough to turn a profit and become a weekly.

Another reason for optimism, says Jenkins, is that many of the *Post*'s 770,000 readers resent its power and like to see it twitted. The *Tribune* provides a steady diet of such twits in its "Press Gang" column, which broke the news, for example, that *Post* metro editor Bob Woodward had been shifted back to investigative work and implied that this was a direct ramification of the Janet Cooke "Jimmygate" fiasco (which the *Post* denies).

Jenkins maintains that the *Post*, unlike the *Tribune*, is indifferent to District of Columbia issues, focuses too much on suburban news, and is only really interested in those local stories that could make a national splash, like Watergate. Naturally, the *Post* denies this. There is no disputing, however, that the *Tribune*'s coverage of local real-estate scandals and of the impact on city neighborhoods of new shopping malls and subway stops has been thorough and impressive — especially considering the paper's shoestring budget and tiny staff. (Only two editors work full-time.)

For their eighty-hour weeks, Jenkins and coeditor Robert Vasilak get \$100 each. Freund says that he and the paper's free-lancers are paid "peanuts," and that nearly all the aspiring writers who work for the tabloid earn their living from nonwriting jobs elsewhere. Nor is the *Tribune*'s office in the basement of a seedy hotel anything to brag about. Freund notes that another D.C. alternative newspaper bit the dust not long ago after splurging on new office furniture. "We don't intend to repeat that mistake," he says, pointing to a decaying leather chair from which the stuffing hangs like entrails. "Outlets for good writing are too hard to find." ■

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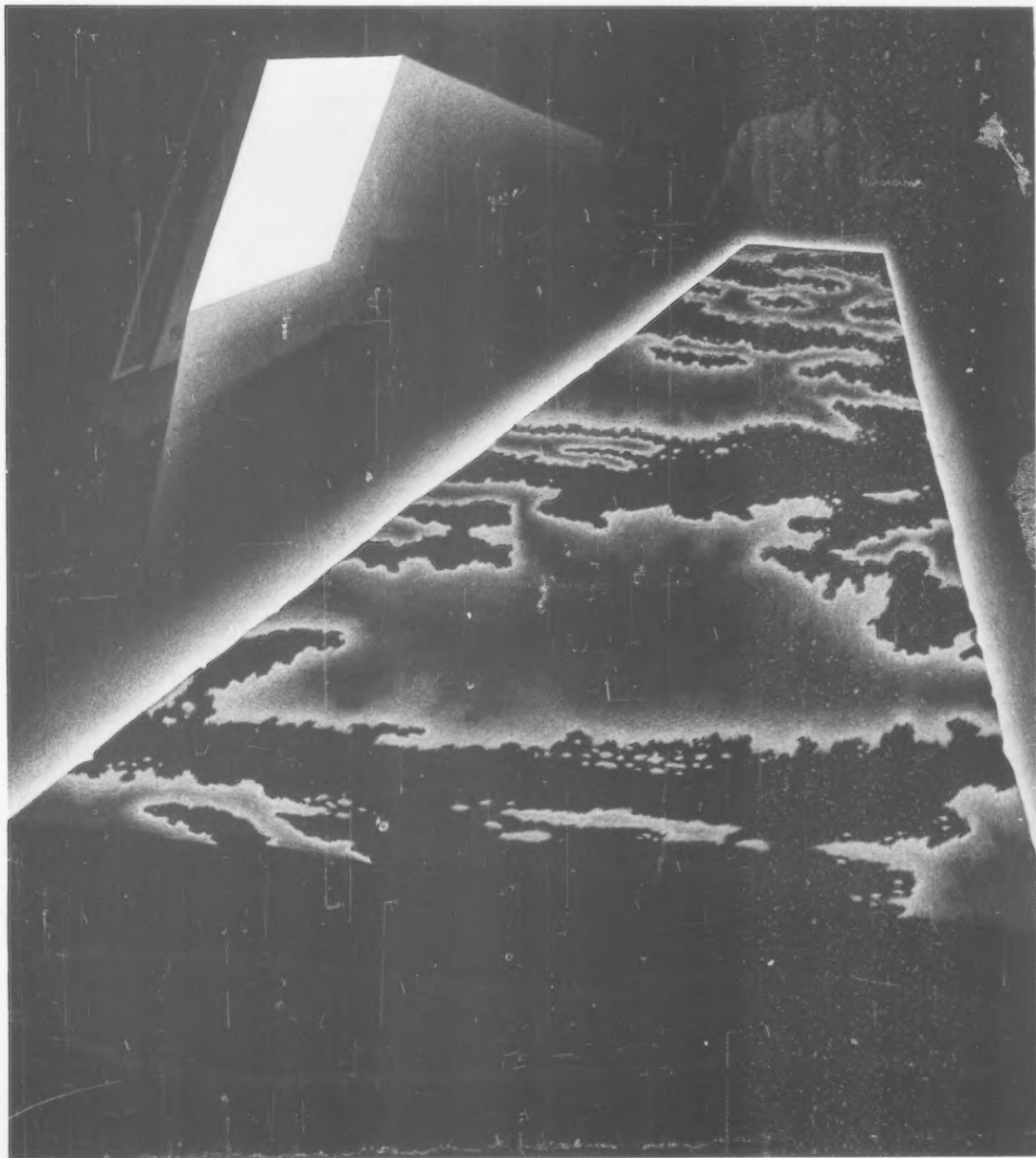
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COMMENT

A political press?

For more than a year, segments of the American press have again been under attack for the way they have covered the struggles of a small country in which the United States government has taken a proprietary interest. The site this time happens to be El Salvador, but the terms of the debate are already familiar from previous disputes over coverage of Cuba, Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and more. The charges, as always, seem to boil down to two: First, that the news stories do not sufficiently favor the American point of view. Second, that the reporters themselves are ideologically untrustworthy.

In the El Salvador controversy, criticism by the U.S. government itself has been muted. Instead, curiously, the onslaught has been led by the editorial page of *The Wall Street Journal*. On February 10, the *Journal* gave its entire editorial space, forty column inches, to a full-scale indictment headed **THE MEDIA'S WAR**. The presentation has the air of rising from a long-standing grievance, for it reaches far beyond the problem of El Salvador — all the way back, in fact, to John Reed.

So long as it concentrates on El Salvador, however, the *Journal's* chief exhibit is the now-celebrated "massacre" story covered by Raymond Bonner of *The New York Times* and Alma Guillermoprieto of *The Washington Post*. The *Journal* critique centers its fire on Bonner for concluding that a massacre had occurred in the village of Mozote in December 1981 and for having allegedly concealed the circumstance that Salvadoran rebels had provided a guided tour of the site. (This was followed a few days later by a *Journal* editor's assertion on *The MacNeill/Lehrer Report* that Bonner had "a political orientation on that story.") The most effective rebuttal is Bonner's original story of January 27, which said, among other things: "It is not possible for an observer who was not present at the time of the massacre to determine independently how many people died or who killed them." Bonner also made it clear that he had visited Mozote in the company of "those who are fighting against the junta. . . ."

The *Journal's* editorial at first seems to be simply a grab bag, ranging as it does through the coverage of Cambodia by the *Times*, the "Jimmy's World" fraud at the *Post*, the long-ago "glorification" of Fidel Castro by Herbert Matthews of the *Times*, and the tired groans of a Freedom House monograph about the biases of the press.

But there is something more. The *Journal*, it appears, has gone over to the school that believes, in its heart of hearts, that news is for or against — that a story is, in the immortal terms of Colonel Cathcart of *Catch-22*, either a feather in

the cap or a black eye. That news is, at bottom, propaganda.

This premise is made clear in the final paragraph of **THE MEDIA'S WAR**, where the *Journal* lays out the underlying assumptions that coverage of El Salvador should reflect: that atrocities are committed by both sides, that a guerrilla success would lead to Cuban domination, that the Salvadoran government has undertaken useful reforms. How this works in practice can be seen in the *Journal's* page-one story on March 30 concerning the Salvadoran elections; it provides a helpful nudge for those who may have missed the point: "The events of Sunday certainly suggest that democracy is preferred here over revolutionary change of the sort being pressed by the guerrillas."

The problem that such views present to journalists is obvious. American journalism has long operated on the basis of what sociologist Gaye Tuchman has called the "strategic ritual" of objectivity, the observance of which permits the press to be a close observer of events without participating in them. It can even be argued that, in an era when the idea of objectivity has been under persistent attack, the American press has actually become *more* objective than before — for example, by providing coverage on both sides of the lines in Vietnam and by covering both the official and the antiwar sides of the Vietnam issue at home.

The lesson to be learned from the dispute over coverage of El Salvador is not only that this position is misunderstood but, worse, that even when it is understood it may not be accepted. (The assassination of four Dutch journalists on their way to interview Salvadoran rebels was a blunt sign of such nonacceptance.) The United States government, of course, has always leaned toward the view that objectivity ends at the water's edge. This idea was refurbished by President Reagan in his March 20 *TV Guide* interview in which he held up as a model the press's behavior in World War II — the same behavior that some historians have condemned as supine and propagandistic. What is more disturbing is to find parts of the journalism community accepting the political boundaries for news prescribed by official policy.

Darts and laurels

Dart: to the Greensboro, North Carolina, *Daily News*, for the cold-blooded headline over a page-one bulletin (January 11) about the death of thirteen Britons in a freak winter storm in the British Isles: **STIFF UPPER LIPS**.

Laurel: to *NBC Nightly News* and correspondent Ken Bode, for following up a February 9, 1982, statement by

George Bush in which the vice president tried to free himself and the Reagan administration from the curse of "voodoo economics" by flatly denying that he had ever used the term and challenging the networks to prove otherwise. Bode invoked the magic art of videotape to conjure up a speech made by Bush at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh on April 10, 1980, showing Bush charging that "what I call voodoo economic policy" "isn't gonna work."



Dart: to *U.S. News & World Report*, for an illustration that didn't illustrate. Accompanying its January 18 story on the "ticking time bomb" of black teenage unemployment was the above photograph, captioned "For young blacks who are unemployed, many empty hours are spent hanging out on city streets." In fact, the four identifiable men in the picture are all in their mid-twenties and employed by the Washington Hilton Hotel.

Laurel: to *Inquiry* magazine and writer Keith Schneider, for the March 15 cover story, "Agent White," a disturbing report on the accumulating evidence against the herbicide Tordon. Despite a striking increase in malignancies and other health problems among the residents of Cherokee County, North Carolina, the weed killer continues to be sprayed there (and elsewhere) with dismayingly abandon by the forest industry, utility companies, and U.S. government agencies.

Dart: to the Arlington, Virginia, *Journal*, for a February 18 feature, *DOING BUSINESS THE MARY KAY WAY*, a forty-nine-paragraph, four-photograph puff for Mary Kay Cosmetics that unblushingly mentioned the product fifty-nine times.

Laurel: to *CBS Evening News* and senior news analyst

Bill Moyers, for a model report (February 24) on congressional efforts to kill an FTC resolution that would require used-car dealers to tell customers about known major defects in the cars they sell. A basic accessory: the National Automobile Dealers Association, which contributed over a million dollars in the 1980 elections — some of it to twenty-six of the twenty-seven members of the House committee who voted against the used-car rule.

Dart: to *The Washington Post*, for assigning a book to a reviewer who had been the subject of a prolonged attack in one of the author's previous books. Clay Blair, whose negative review of Joseph C. Goulden's *Korea: The Untold Story of the War*, ran in the February 14 *Post*, had been portrayed by Goulden in his 1965 book *The Curtis Caper* in such an unflattering way that Blair had publicly expressed an urge to "break both of Goulden's arms at the elbow." (And thanks to Greg Walter of the *Philadelphia Daily News* for reviewing the whole sorry episode in a March 18 column.)

Laurel: to the *Nashville Tennessean*, for the journalistic resolution of a judicial and moral tragedy of nearly seventy years ago — the sensational conviction and subsequent lynching, propelled by a wave of rabid anti-Semitism, of Leo Frank, a young Jewish factory superintendent in Atlanta, for the murder of a teenage girl. Acting on a tip, the newspaper conducted a two-month investigation that ultimately confirmed a frightened eyewitness's belated account: Frank had been innocent; the true murderer was a local janitor, the prosecution's chief witness, now dead.

Dart: to WKFT-TV, Fayetteville, North Carolina, for trading its professional birthright for a mess of footage. When the Committee in Support of the People of El Salvador called a news conference prior to its planned march in protest of the training of Salvadoran soldiers at nearby Fort Bragg, the station gave WKFT credentials to a county sheriff's deputy that allowed him and his videotape machine access to the journalists-only meeting. (Station officials later explained that in return for use of the WKFT sticker the sheriff's department had agreed to share with the station any film shot at the press conference and march.)

Laurel: to Louise White, a stringer for the Southern Siskiyou Newspapers in Siskiyou County, California. Suspecting that the county board of supervisors was flouting the state's open-meetings law, White dug into county records and discovered that, in 1981 alone, the board had met in secret session 102 times. As a result of her protest, which was supported by other news media in the area, the board reformed.

Why an ear, nose and throat man went into radishes, lettuce and peppers.



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Inside the Voice of America

Government radio has gone to war —
with the Soviets and with itself

by ROBIN GREY

Forty years ago, on February 24, 1942, announcer William Hale moved up to one of those huge, spring-mounted radio microphones in a small New York studio to intone in deliberately accented German: "This is a voice speaking from America. . . a voice from America at war. . . The news may be good or bad. We shall tell you the truth."

Those inspirational words have been romantically preserved by the Voice of America. Accordingly, much was made of "truth" as the fortieth anniversary of VOA's first broadcast was celebrated in the sterile marble hallways of the Health and Human Services Building on Washington's Independence Avenue, where VOA's main studios and editorial staffs broadcast some 900 hours a week in thirty-nine languages to more than eighty million listeners throughout the world.

Voice of America directors from past years mingled with VOA editors, writers, reporters, translators, and producers. From the International Communication Agency, to which VOA is subordinate, there were the officials and foreign service officers who, formally and through personal ties, ultimately control VOA. Charles Z. Wick, President Ronald Reagan's longtime friend who runs ICA, and James B. Conkling, Wick's old friend who then was running VOA, were there, and so too was President Reagan — not to mingle, but to address. Conkling talked about making VOA "truly attractive — a kind of listening experience which inspires new generations to join us." Reagan praised VOA for remaining "faithful to those standards of journalism that will not compromise the truth." He recounted how as a young radio sports announcer he had dramatized wire reports of baseball games, sometimes embellishing them with details drawn from his own imagination. "But

the truth got there," was the moral of the story. "In other words, it can be attractively packaged."

The messages were about what one would expect at a volatile time when VOA staffers suspect that the Reagan administration is trying to recapture those good old days of World War II. Then, VOA combated German and Japanese propaganda with its own version of the truth. This time, the enemy is the Soviet Union. The Reagan administration, especially Charles Z. Wick, founder of what is called in ICA "Project Truth" to counter "Soviet disinformation," seems to many VOA staffers to be eager to load the propaganda guns, to let loose salvos of "truth" at Moscow in what the administration sees as a life-and-death struggle with the enemy.

Old-boy network

To understand what is going on at VOA, one must understand that the Voice is made up of two different kinds of people. There are the ICA career foreign service men and women, many of whom have spent years at overseas embassies as public affairs officers (PAOs) or public information officers (PIOs). Along with a sprinkling of State Department diplomats, they make up the management of VOA, supervising the work of the second group in VOA — the editors, writers, and correspondents.

Often competent, sometimes outstanding foreign service officers, the PAOs and the PIOs nonetheless come to their VOA jobs with certain views about what to do with information. They rarely, if ever, have worked as journalists or editors. Few have ever gotten further into journalism than the composition of a press release. To them, information, as often as not, is a malleable material. A diplomat tends to consider the consequences of information. A journalist tends to consider information the final step in the chain. So the PAOs and the PIOs instinctively look on the news differently than do the VOA staffers who have been recruited from newspapers, wire services, and radio stations. The

Robin Grey, who has observed the VOA at close range for years, has written this article under a pseudonym in order to protect sources in the agency.



VOA director James B. Conkling (above right) helped ICA director Charles Z. Wick cut the anniversary party cake. But cutting the bureaucratic mustard was another story. Four weeks later, Conkling was out — and John Hughes (inset), a Wick senior deputy, was in.



both: VOA

former service chief of one East European language broadcast, who has also put in time as a PIO, confided an example: "My job is to promote American foreign policy. If the policy is good relations with [Country X], then I broadcast good news. If relations are not so good, then broadcasts reflect that." Question: "What if U.S. policy favors good relations, but the news is bad?" Answer: "Then we find favorable information to broadcast."

The old-boy network of public affairs and press officers works harmoniously. The PAO in Moscow knows that if he cables VOA's U.S.S.R. division chief, recently back from a stint in the Soviet Union, complaining about VOA Russian language broadcasts, the complaint will be heard sympathetically. After all, they were in the trenches together. They *know*, as few know, what the enemy is like and how the battle must be fought.

During a foreign service officer's tour of duty with VOA — usually about four years — ICA headquarters will decide whether he is destined for more prestigious ranks — who knows? — career minister, even ambassador someday; or whether he will be consigned to dead-end jobs. The career foreign service officer temporarily assigned to VOA is ever mindful that there is more to the news than the news. Diplomatic relations are involved. Careers are at stake.

By contrast, the VOA central-newsroom writer, editor, or correspondent is institutionally, as well as by background, encouraged to see "news as news," to worry less about the diplomatic consequences to the United States of reporting international events. He or she is thus separated from the ICA foreign service officer by a deep, unbridgeable gulf of different interests. Each group, accordingly,

reacts differently to the raw information that daily pours by tens of thousands of words into VOA's central newsroom at a volume that usually allows only instinctive decisions as to its news merits.

Let Poland Be Poland

Charles Z. Wick promoted the idea of the international television spectacular *Let Poland Be Poland* after Poland's Premier Wojciech Jaruzelski declared martial law on December 13, 1981. An extrovert bubbling with ideas, Wick is a lawyer by education, a one-time real estate speculator, and a former TV and film producer (he wrote and produced *Snow White and the Three Stooges* for Twentieth Century Fox). For *Poland*, Wick drew on old Ronald Reagan friends like Bob Hope and Frank Sinatra, and on new acquaintances like Margaret Thatcher and Helmut Schmidt; he brought in a Hollywood producer, with an Oscar awards ceremony and other television spectacles among his credits, to create a one-and-one-half-hour videotape that laboriously and sanctimoniously portrayed the Russians as the bad guys and the Poles and Lech Walesa as the good guys.

One trouble with *Let Poland Be Poland* as propaganda was that it was just plain bad. It took an inherently moving, historic striving for freedom that told its own story in its own words and pictures, and turned it into a melodrama about a brave little Poland, a melodrama larded with dull diplomatic recitations by Schmidt et al on the theme of the injustice of repression.

The other trouble with *Poland* was that it was produced for television, and thus was beamed at the very audiences — in Western Europe, for example — that least needed to be

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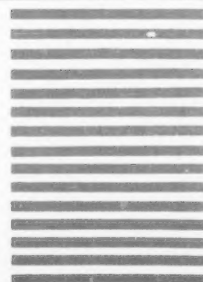
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convinced of Moscow's imperialism and of the Jaruzelski regime's perfidy. The real targets of Wick's propaganda — the millions in the Soviet Union and East Europe — heard only sound tracks of *Poland* and truncated ones at that, as editors of most of VOA's thirty-nine language broadcast services labored to convert a picture story into a solely sound medium.

Let Poland Be Poland was considered a flop by almost everyone except ICA headquarters, at 1750 Pennsylvania Avenue, a block from the White House. Interviewed on the *CBS Morning News*, Wick's deputy, Gilbert A. Robinson, said that "*Poland* was enormously successful from what we hear in the comments coming in around the world." A VOA correspondent reported the same day from Europe that the *London Times* had described *Poland* as "almost as dull as an East European propaganda film." A BBC critic was quoted as saying that the program "raised smiles in sophisticated Europe." France's *Le Monde* called it a bore.

The Nicolaides memo

Thanks to a private memorandum written to VOA's then-director Conkling and leaked last November to *The Washington Post*, Philip Nicolaides briefly became something of a household name in Washington. The political right did and does regard Nicolaides as the Jesse Helms of the ideological war with the Russians. "The Voice of America is trying quietly to remove a pro-American infiltrator . . .," complained the *National Review* in mid-February, as Nicolaides was being eased out. "The VOA staff prefers not to disturb the waters, arguing that it is more 'credible' if it refrains from broadcasting 'propaganda', i.e., the truth."

A former Houston radio commentator, Nicolaides had been hired after Wick took over. At first, he worked "Up-town," as VOA calls its parent ICA headquarters located a dozen blocks from the VOA editorial offices and studios. For reasons that remain unclear, Conkling asked Nicolaides to put down on paper some ideas about what VOA should be doing. Thus was born the famous "Nicolaides memo" of September 21, 1981, segments of which appeared on the front page of the November 13 *Washington Post* under the headline PROPAGANDA ROLE URGED FOR VOICE OF AMERICA.

Nicolaides' ten-page memo argued forcefully that "we are — as all the world understands — a propaganda agency" and that the "only convincing *raison d'être* for the VOA, therefore, is to counter [the Soviet] broadcast barrage. . . . We must portray the Soviet Union as the last great predatory empire on earth. . . . We must strive to 'destabilize' the Soviet Union and its satellites by promoting disaffection between peoples and rulers. . . . We should fan the flames of nationalism within the puppet states controlled by the USSR. . . . We should extol the merits of our system of pluralist, representative democracy and free enterprise."

Nicolaides' portrayal of VOA as a psy-war instrument in the Reagan administration's assault on the Soviet Union appalled many VOA staffers. But, it is important to note, not all. In a sense, Nicolaides was only asking VOA to recall its World War II heritage, but now facing a different enemy.

continued



Speaking at the VOA's fortieth anniversary ceremonies on February 24, President Reagan recalled his own experiences as an Iowa broadcaster decades ago — and, as Frank Reynolds reported on ABC's *World News* that night, "had them rolling in the aisles." Below, some excerpts from Reagan's talk.

“More than forty years ago, I was a pioneer in radio, a sports announcer. And I found myself broadcasting major league baseball games from telegraphed reports. I was not at the stadium. . . .

Now, if the game was rather dull, you could say, 'It's a hard-hit ball down towards second base. The shortstop is going over after the ball and makes a wild stab, picks it up, turns and gets him out just in time.'

Now, I submit to you that I told the truth, if he was out from shortstop to first, and I don't know whether he really ran over toward second base and made a one-handed stab, or whether he just squatted down and took the ball when it came to him.

But the truth got there, and in other words, it can be attractively packaged.

Well, we're justifiably proud that, unlike Soviet broadcasts, the Voice of America is not only committed to telling its country's story, but also remains faithful to those standards of journalism that will not compromise the truth. **”**



One of the best-informed newsrooms in the world, the News and Current Affairs section is a main choke point of the VOA news flow. News reports that fail to clear this first gatekeeper don't get on the air.

VOA

Conkling, it turned out, had hired Nicolaides last fall as the new deputy for editorial commentary to the VOA program director (equivalent to editor in chief). A news conference was hastily called after the *Post* story appeared so that Conkling, exposed to his first experience with news-leak politics in Washington, could disassociate himself from the views of Nicolaides. A petition objecting to Nicolaides was already being circulated throughout the VOA building, and staffers had already met privately with Conkling. Nonetheless, in a tactical mistake, Conkling refused to jettison Nicolaides right there and then. The impression lingered that he shared Nicolaides' sentiments even if he did not intend, as he publicly stated, to shape VOA into a propaganda machine. Nicolaides was reassigned Uptown in February and finally was let go by ICA in March. Too much publicity had made him a political liability. But there was more than a controversial individual at issue.

The memorandum caused particular outrage among VOA news professionals because in spirit, and for the most part in letter, it went against the entrenched "credibility" argument. "Credibility" had become the golden word in the VOA newsroom during the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations as more confident and competent news editors and staffs fought off Uptown censors. "Credibility" translated into forthright news. The argument, basic enough, was that increasingly sophisticated VOA audiences in countries like the Soviet Union would no longer accept hard-sell propaganda.

This new "credibility" was severely tested by Watergate. Kenneth Giddens, a wealthy businessman and Nixon appointee, was VOA director during those crucial years. Giddens's politics were right-wing, and he was clearly sympathetic to Nixon. But Giddens, who owned a television station in his native Mobile, Alabama, took a

proprietary interest in VOA. In a momentous bureaucratic fight, he fended off powerful Uptown pressures to tone down VOA reporting of Watergate revelations. As a matter of credibility, he argued, with newsroom support, the story had to be aired. As a consequence, VOA broadcast throughout the world as full an account as one could find of the political demise of President Nixon.

Ever since then, VOA news staffers have used the Watergate coverage as the supreme example of the Voice's claim to credibility. Indeed, some argue that had VOA been forced to parrot the Nixon White House line during Watergate, VOA itself would have suffered enormous damage when Nixon resigned. That may be debatable. But there is little doubt that VOA attracts larger and larger world audiences because it is perceived as a relatively objective source of news as well as of official United States government information.

The Charter

The renewed dispute over VOA-the-Government-Mouthpiece or VOA-the-Public-Radio tests what VOA knows as "the Charter." Years of bureaucratic feuding of the most vicious sort between VOA news editors and foreign service officers who want VOA controlled, watched, and censored eventually produced Public Law 94-350, signed by President Gerald Ford in July 1976.

It succinctly states three principles: 1. "VOA news will be accurate, objective, and comprehensive"; 2. VOA will "present a balanced and comprehensive projection of significant American thought and institutions"; and 3. "VOA will present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively."

No inside knowledge is necessary to see that the Charter's first principle was designed to please the VOA news advo-

cates, the last to soothe the manipulators of news, and the middle one to satisfy various critics, some in Congress, who argue that American tax-supported international radio should extol America in broadcasts to foreign audiences. In short, the Charter was a compromise. But it was a milestone. It put VOA's news function for the first time under a congressional umbrella, and lessened somewhat the complete control of VOA by the mother house — Uptown.

Along with the Charter, agreements were worked out between VOA and Uptown in the 1970s on how VOA's foreign correspondents should operate. As the number of foreign bureaus was increased to their present fifteen, open warfare broke out over the question of U.S. embassy control over VOA reports filed by correspondents. There were cases, some of them fully aired in Washington's newspapers, of American ambassadors or their PAOs censoring reports filed by VOA foreign correspondents. The American ambassador in Israel vehemently protested, for example, when a VOA correspondent contacted the PLO. An American ambassador in Yugoslavia personally censored a VOA correspondent's report on American arms sales to Yugoslavia.

Such direct interference, along with more common indirect censorship and pressures, produced a new guideline in June 1978. The rules existing through most of the 1970s, known as "CA 800" (for Circular Airgram), required VOA correspondents traveling in communist countries to submit their stories to PAOs or PIOs for editorial clearance before filing. In all other countries, the embassy public affairs staff could demand clearance if it chose.

The tension eased following the new agreement. It was another compromise. VOA correspondents would be "supervised directly by the Chief of the VOA News Division in Washington and receive assignments exclusively from the Voice of America." VOA correspondents on entering a country would inform the resident PAO. But neither the PAOs nor anyone else could censor the scripts as PAOs routinely had done.

The new guidelines, while freeing correspondents from harassment and interference, also put the onus on VOA editors in Washington. They became the targets of ICA or State Department wrath and, in some cases, they themselves turned into censors.

The news flow

The organization of VOA baffles most political appointees, as well as many foreign service officers who, coming back from overseas, are inserted into VOA for their obligatory domestic tours. In one sense, VOA is thirty-nine radio stations tied together by the VOA logo and by NCA — the central "News and Current Affairs" section from which they get all of their immediate newscasts and the bulk of their correspondents' reports, background pieces, features, and analyses.

The NCA newsroom runs twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week on the third floor of the Health and Human Services Building — North. It churns out a dozen or so ten-minute newscasts each day, drawn from possibly one of the best-informed newsrooms in the world. It daily proc-

esses up to fifty correspondents' reports: the two- and three-minute radio spots from VOA's fifteen foreign and nine domestic bureaus. It provides dozens of other news items produced by regional desks and tailored to VOA's main geographic broadcasting divisions (Soviet Union, Europe, Middle East, Africa, Latin America, Asia).

The NCA newsroom is to VOA's language services roughly what the AP is to its clients. It is the first sturdy gatekeeper in an international news flow that begins, for example, with a report of a new twist in the Polish story. The report, received by telephone (for English) and telex (for foreign language translation) from VOA's own correspondent or from news services, moves through the VOA central newsroom editors. Then, depending on editors' decisions, it travels via in-house teletype to the language services, where it is either translated and broadcast by a native speaker, or discarded as not useful. If a news report fails to clear the first gatekeeper — the central newsroom — chances are that it will never be broadcast by VOA in English or any other language. Thus, the NCA newsroom is a main choke point of the VOA news flow.

But there are thirty-nine other editorial checkpoints that also decide what, for example, millions of Chinese finally hear in Mandarin, or Indians in Hindi, or Argentines in Spanish. The language services of VOA, including the dominant "Worldwide English," are individual editorial satrapies. These thirty-nine radio stations may get most of their information from NCA in a round-the-clock flow of fully prepared newscasts, correspondents' reports, features, analyses, and commentaries, but what then happens to these thousands of English words depends on a complicated interplay of nationalist sentiments, personal ideology, bureaucratic politics, and private interpretations of the American national interest — and least of all on what might be regarded as objective, dispassionate news judgments.

Since the VOA language service staffs are neither journalistically well trained nor immersed in the day's news, they are easily influenced by the Uptown foreign service corps. A classified cable from the American embassy in Peking, Moscow, or Cairo has a powerful impact on the Chinese, Russian, or Arabic services. First, because the foreign service officers overseeing these services are more sympathetic to embassy complaints and suggestions for VOA broadcasts. And, second, because the language service staffs, even if they were disposed to object to "back channel" communications, are seldom armed with the information to contest a point.

The "hit list"

There was talk by last fall of a "hit list" in VOA that extended from the top down through the layers of editors to the NCA newsroom. The VOA scuttlebutt was that the Reagan administration was prepared to change the Voice's programming. The scuttlebutt wasn't exactly fantasy. Presidential candidate Ronald Reagan had said in a major foreign policy speech in Chicago in March 1980 that American government-funded radio systems should be used to extol

models of free enterprise like Taiwan and South Korea and to reveal failings of communist economies. (He included not only VOA but also the formerly CIA-sponsored and now congressionally funded Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, which broadcast more detailed internal information to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, respectively.) Richard V. Allen, soon to be appointed national security adviser, was believed to be the chief architect of a plan to turn VOA into a more aggressive instrument of foreign policy. And, indeed, Allen one day last September picked up the phone to rage at both ICA director Wick and VOA director Conkling over a story that a VOA correspondent had filed about the CIA-organized arms supply to Afghan resistance fighters. The story itself was old, and the VOA report did no more than repeat a recent ABC exposé. The point of Allen's rage was not whether the story was true or not — it happened to be true — but whether VOA, as a U.S. tax-supported radio operation, should tell the truth if the facts supported Soviet propaganda or contradicted American policy.

The CIA-arms-to-Afghan story became an unintentional catalyst. It moved events along more quickly than was desired by the VOA editorial management held over from the Carter administration. That news-oriented management had not yet "educated" Conkling. His international experience was limited. His knowledge of VOA lore and theology was nonexistent. His experience in savage Washington bureaucratic street fighting was comparable to Citizen Goodbody taking on the New York subway. Meanwhile, Uptown was educating Reagan's old friend Wick in, among other things, VOA's errant ways. Conkling, who spent much of his first months in Uptown meetings, finally returned to VOA to clean house.

It began in November with the deputy director, William Haratunian. A foreign service officer who had been chief of NCA in the late 1960s and who had come back to the Voice a convert to the ideal of unvarnished news, Haratunian was hoping to finish out his years with VOA. He was attending his mother's funeral when he got the news that he was out. His replacement was a career foreign service officer, Terrance Catherman, whom Uptown once had put in charge of the Russian service. Haratunian's chief assistant, William Read, who had worked for Haratunian in the newsroom in the 1970s and who was thus part of the old newsroom gang, was abruptly assigned Uptown. His replacement was Charles Courtney, a career foreign service officer with no VOA experience.

The important position of program manager had been vacant for some months, since the departure of a former public affairs officer who in his one-year VOA stint had been commonly regarded as ineducable. Cliff Groce, a longtime VOA hand, and for years the deputy program manager, had been running things in the meantime. During Conkling's early months, Groce refused to supply Conkling with the names of English division staffers who had aired a report that the U.S. embassy in Moscow found objectionable. Groce is said to have argued that the request smacked

of McCarthyism. Groce, like Read, was assigned Uptown. Meanwhile, the position of program manager was filled by a Washington-based commercial radio executive, Frank Scott. Next, the NCA chief of ten years, a former VOA Middle East correspondent, Alan Heil, was edged out and put into a newly created job of program development. His successor was Gene Pell, NBC's former Moscow, and then Pentagon, correspondent.

In this shuffle, Heil's deputy for news, Bernard Kamenske, who had substantially raised the professional level of VOA's newsroom in the 1970s, and who was rumored to be on the Conkling "hit list," took a job as senior editor with Ted Turner's Cable News Network in Washington. Kamenske's resignation jarred VOA central newsroom staffers. It earned an editorial in *The New York Times*, as well as news reports in the *Times*, *The Washington Post*, and on network television, suggesting that the Reagan administration was moving to restructure VOA into a propaganda machine.

The next to go was a Kamenske protégé, Mark Willen, an accomplished correspondent who had been brought in from VOA's State Department bureau to upgrade the innocuous sounding "round-up desk." Under Kamenske and Willen, the round-up desk in the NCA newsroom had set the pace for fast, hard news, untouched by politics. It drew the best writers to produce continuous newscasts for the "house" — the thirty-nine language services. It left the dregs of the news to the regional desks, where news was often soft-pedaled — "blanderized" was the VOA term. Willen, like Kamenske, bristled at the slightest tampering with news. One Tuesday morning in mid-February, he was called into the office of Conkling's new deputy, Catherman. There Willen was told that he was being assigned to VOA's New Delhi bureau, and was expected to begin Hindi language lessons the next Monday.

The cumulative result of these assignments was a clear and unencumbered chain of command from Conkling straight down to that first major gatekeeper, the NCA news desk. True, Frank Scott was a professional news executive and Gene Pell was a respected journalist who early in his VOA tenure announced his intention to shield the news writers from Uptown. But it also was true that the old newsroom group that had stubbornly fought ambassadors and Uptown, that had lobbied Congress to get the Charter approved, and that privately and publicly had argued for news "credibility" — this VOA group had been decimated in about four months.

Thus, there were few left to do battle when, for example, the head of the VOA censorship office walked into the office of a deputy NCA news chief one day in February and ordered that a story about the assassination of a Turkish diplomat in San Francisco be changed. *A news story.*

No one had tried to cross that sacrosanct line while the Heil-Kamenske team ran the newsroom.

Even as the old news group was being cleaned out, however, Conkling himself was under pressure from the VOA news staff, which suspected that VOA was being turned into an anti-Soviet propaganda machine, and from conser-



VOA

From adjacent studios, Master Control picks up newscasts in thirty-nine languages, sending them to overseas relay transmitters and onward to VOA audiences on five continents.

vatives, who suspected that it was not. In March, in a surprise announcement, Conkling in fact resigned. Although it was rumored that he did so under pressure from Wick, Conkling said he was returning to his native California because he couldn't adjust to the workings of government.

In his place, the White House appointed John Hughes, a Wick senior deputy whose journalistic credentials include a Pulitzer Prize and twenty-five years of experience with *The Christian Science Monitor*, several of them as editor. But in his year's experience with Uptown, Hughes had worked closely on "Project Truth" and *Let Poland Be Poland*. And that record caused apprehension in the VOA newsroom as to which hat Hughes would wear as VOA director.

Censorship U.S.A.

Hughes took over a VOA already partially structured to respond to Uptown political directives. Censorship in VOA operates through the innocent-sounding "Policy Application Staff." In pre-Reagan administration days, "policy officers" assigned by Uptown variously censored scripts, advised of politically significant news events, and sometimes prescribed how to write the news before it was made. But the advice of policy officers was often ignored and, after Congress approved the VOA Charter in 1976, they seldom were taken seriously.

In the Conkling sweep of the VOA news group, the VOA censor's office was reorganized. The "Policy Applications Staff" had been off to one side on former organizational charts. On the new charts, the action line came straight down from the VOA Director through deputies, and then branched off: right, to the "Director of Programs"; left, to the "Director of Policy." For the first time, VOA's policy director ranked equally with the program director. Besides that, the policy office was quickly authorized to expand from four to seven members. Official notes of one of the morning editorial meetings of senior editors reported that "Deputy VOA Director [for Policy and Programs] Courtney said the new policy chief, Jack Harrod, will use the additional people for more precise regionalization, for centralizing and strengthening policy guidance procedures, and for developing better coordination with policy elements outside VOA." Translated from bureaucratese, this meant that the censor's office was being given more people to watch the VOA news flow more closely.

A portent of tighter control came one late-January day when Deputy Director Courtney and Program Director Scott were away. Policy Director Harrod chaired the 9:30 A.M. news meeting at which division chiefs get their day's news instructions. After that, a rather regular routine developed. "Policy" more openly suggested the direction of VOA

news reporting. Thus, for days before President Reagan's speech proposing a "Caribbean basin" plan, VOA policy reminded division chiefs at the 9:30 A.M. editorial meeting of the approaching address. Policy officers took to mentioning and distributing overnight diplomatic cables from U.S. embassies suggesting how VOA programming could support American foreign policy. Policy officers also increasingly emphasized dates of official visits by foreign dignitaries, thus implicitly directing coverage by VOA. There was a day when the deputy director for policy and programs himself asked during the morning editorial meeting which divisions had broadcast a story about "yellow rain" that was of political interest to Uptown. The lucky division chiefs were those who were able to say the story had been broadcast. Others, already intimidated, promised it would be broadcast, albeit a couple of days late.

If VOA censorship begins with a word to the wise, it moves in more forceful ways to informal manipulation of information, to self-censorship, to Uptown pressure, and finally to outright blue penciling of VOA commentaries — the editorials which, by agreement, are the preserve of Uptown.

The "national interest" always hovers above VOA news. Thus, last fall, after the American embassy in Manila complained in diplomatic cables that VOA broadcasts were encouraging Vietnamese to flee their country, VOA's then-Deputy Director Haratunian was called to account by what the unofficial VOA news staff letter *News/Room* described as a "hostile" House Judiciary subcommittee. Along with allegations by committee members that VOA had virtually assured the "boat people" that American Seventh Fleet ships were standing by to pick them up, Haratunian was reminded by congresswoman Pat Schroeder of Colorado that, to VOA listeners, the American government and VOA are synonymous.

There have been a number of other recent instances of State Department complaints about VOA broadcasts that made their way into *News/Room*. The Soviet Union's leading Americanist, Georgi Arbatov, head of Moscow's Institute for U.S.A. and Canada, was said by the U.S. Embassy in Moscow to have gotten too much air time on VOA's Worldwide English broadcast. The embassy in Sri Lanka complained that using the word "warplanes" to describe American jet fighters made the United States look aggressive. The U.S. Mission in Geneva protested that VOA talked about "anti-government guerrillas" in Afghanistan; a VOA policy officer said the more "effective" description would be "freedom fighters" or "patriots."

These are concrete instances of political oversight, if you will, that become known to VOA newsroom staffers. Other political editing is applied to individual writers or correspondents, who are challenged over a word, a phrase, sometimes an entire script, by news editors conscious of VOA's extra dimension, the "national interest." The "chill factor," as some VOA editors call the persistent shadow of VOA censorship, is less frigid in the central newsroom at the desks producing newscasts. It is felt more acutely by the correspondents, whose individual judgments come

into play more. It is icier still among those writers who produce "analyses" and "commentaries" in the NCA section. And it is most numbing, perhaps, in the foreign language services, where foreign service officers readily respond to embassy complaints and policy "guidance."

There is, to be sure, no written guide to what may — and may not — be broadcast by VOA. But everyone knows instinctively that VOA reports a presidential summit — to take one instance of high-profile news — in terms most complimentary to the president, and less approvingly of national governments or leaders who object to American policies. The tendency to soften news of the White House can be traced to an interpretation of VOA as a diplomatic partisan. What is objectionable self-censorship to one staffer is prudent news-handling by government radio to another. Is it the "peace" movement in Western Europe that is opposing American nuclear missiles, or is it the "pacifists"? Is it Soviet "President" Brezhnev or Soviet "ruler" Brezhnev? How will VOA's foreign listeners interpret these words? How will its political overseers or U.S. embassies interpret them?

The alert VOA writer, editor, or correspondent absorbs successive administrations' political views and — sometimes without even consciously realizing it — weaves them into his or her own vocabulary. In the Reagan administration, the themes are tough on Moscow, strong on American military power, up for free enterprise. Everyone in VOA knows the themes like the alphabet.

Truth or consequences

The Reagan administration's penchant for "packaging the truth" and for engaging in ideological warfare with Moscow pulls VOA in a different direction than it has been traveling. The evidence so far is that the Reagan administration, beginning with Wick's ICA, is bent on politicizing information. The respected scholar on Yugoslavia Fred Warner Neal revealed in a recent letter to *The New York Times* that, as a quid pro quo for ICA-paid lecture fees, he had been asked to promote the Reagan foreign policy during a planned trip to Yugoslavia.

VOA newsroom staffers sense that the Reagan administration wants the facts selected from a different perspective, to demonstrate that the United States offers the most beneficial political and economic system in the world. That may be true, as most Americans surely believe, and it may be true that the Soviet system is abysmal, as most Americans surely also believe. But that is not news, nor the measure by which to judge and report news.

What is at test are two philosophies of international broadcasting by government radio. To the Reagan administration, it is summed up in the show business approach that Reagan lightly expressed at VOA's fortieth anniversary and that revealed itself more graphically in *Let Poland Be Poland*.

To VOA journalists, the philosophy is vaguely contained in the Charter, at least in the first two points. It is contained more precisely in the words of that first broadcast in German: "The news may be good or bad. . . . We shall tell you the truth." ■

Letter from 'The Atomic Capital of the Nation'

How one industry, and one paper, made the desert bloom

by CASSANDRA TATE

The good cheer was as limitless as the horizon during groundbreaking ceremonies for a nuclear power plant near Richland, Washington, ten years ago. The mood was such that the assembled dignitaries readily relinquished a bit of their dignity in posing for a commemorative photograph in the local newspaper, the *Tri-City Herald*. They wore cowboy hats and broad smiles and tugged on ropes held by a whip-wielding federal power official. They were the "workers" who would "keep nuclear power plowing ahead." Third from the left was Glenn C. Lee, publisher of the *Herald*.

The plant — still under construction, and billions of dollars over budget — is one of three projects undertaken by the Washington Public Power Supply System at the Hanford Federal Nuclear Reservation, in the desert of south-central Washington. The reservation was established in 1943 to produce plutonium for the nation's first atomic bombs. Richland, ten miles south, was built by the government to house Hanford workers. It is located near the farming communities of Pasco and Kennewick, at the confluence of the Snake, Yakima, and Columbia Rivers. The three communities are known as the Tri-Cities. Their relationship with the atom has been long and prosperous, due in large measure to the efforts of Glenn C. Lee and his paper.

In 1947, Lee and a business partner, Robert F. Philip, bought a weekly in Pasco and turned it into an afternoon daily. The paper, the communities, and operations at Hanford flourished as the

production of plutonium was increased during the Cold War era. Then, in 1963, the government announced that it had plenty of plutonium and would therefore shut down some of its operations at Hanford. "It was a dirty trick," says Lee. "The government had just sold the town to the people. There wasn't any other industry. They sold the town and then cancelled out the jobs! We knew the place would disappear. So we — the *Tri-City Herald* and me as publisher — went to work to keep it alive."

The effort to convert Hanford from wartime to peaceful purposes was led by the Tri-City Nuclear Industrial Council. The council, organized by Lee and Philip, now consists of about 150 representatives of the business community and the nuclear industry. Lee continues to serve as a top officer; Philip resigned from the council in December 1981. The

council proved to be enormously effective. As a result of its activities, billions of public and private dollars have poured into the area, creating a dazzling array of nuclear and other high-technology projects on and off the reservation. The Tri-Cities population has grown from less than 5,000 at the end of World War II to more than 130,000 today. Three-fourths of its citizens are directly or indirectly supported by nuclear industries. Although there has been some reduction in federal spending at Hanford recently, a March 6, 1982, *Herald* headline cheerfully reported TRI-CITY ECONOMY KEEPS ROLLING AS NATION LAGS.

The *Herald* has not been unaffected by all this prosperity. Lee, who says he and Philip bought the paper for \$85,000, sold it to the Sacramento-based McClatchy chain in 1979, by which

Pulling for nuclear power: Among the pullers posing at a 1972 groundbreaking ceremony for a nuclear plant was the *Herald's* publisher, Glenn C. Lee (third from the left).

WPSS

\$450 million n-plant started

Tri-City Herald

Regional Voice of the Mid-Columbia Empire COPY 16

VOL. 64, NO. 194 Monday, August 14, 1972 Pasco, Kennewick, Richland, Washington

Today's News Today

Covering the story, "Nuclear money keeps the Pacific Northwest growing ahead," is today's commemorative ceremony for the Hanford No. 2 nuclear power plant. "Nuclear money" is the byline of the author, R. B. Richardson, Jr., a Washington Public Power Supply System administrator. Planning ahead, from left, are: J. J. Stone, Washington Public Power Supply System's managing director; Charles Savage, chairman of the Washington State Joint Committee on Nuclear Energy; Glenn C. Lee, Tri-City Herald publisher; and Tri-City Nuclear Industrial Council president, Dr. Donald Stricker, chairman of Washington State Thermal Power Plant No. 2. The group is standing in front of the new Hanford No. 2 nuclear power plant.

Airwest agrees to restore early a.m. flights to coast

Airwest Airlines has agreed to restore its early morning flights to the West Coast, a move that will benefit passengers and airlines alike. The airline announced the decision today, stating that it will resume its early morning flights to the West Coast starting next week. This move is expected to increase competition and provide more options for passengers.

Negotiation, not pullout

Fish count
 The department of fish and wildlife has announced that it will be conducting a fish count in the Pacific Northwest. The count is expected to provide valuable data on the state of the fish population in the region.

Cassandra Tate, a frequent contributor to the Review and to other national magazines, is the editor of SeattleVoice magazine.

time the *Herald's* circulation had grown from a few thousand to more than 40,000. Although parties to the purchase will not discuss the terms, informed speculation puts the sale price at more than \$30 million.

Lee continued to serve as publisher until May 1981, when he was succeeded by Kelso Gillenwater, a thirty-five-year-old Tennessean. He remains on the masthead as "publisher emeritus." In announcing the transition, C. K. McClatchy, president of the chain, noted that "Few men in the newspaper industry have single-handedly influenced a newspaper the way Glenn [Lee] has the *Herald*." Certainly, few publishers have appeared in the pages of their newspapers with as much regularity. News stories have quoted his remarks on nuclear and growth-related issues; his speeches to civic groups and his testimony on legislative matters have been reported at length; he's been photographed welcoming visiting dignitaries and participating in other ceremonial events. The headlines reported such things as LEE URGES N REACTOR WARM WEATHER USE (August 16, 1973); TIME RUNNING OUT FOR FARM DEVELOPMENT, SAYS LEE (February 6, 1976); and NATION ON DISASTER COURSE, SAYS PUBLISHER (February 21, 1978).

"If a newspaper is worth its salt, it sure as hell has got to represent its community," says Lee, a bulldog of a man, crewcut, still sturdy-looking at seventy-one, with a formidable gaze set off by bristly, charging eyebrows. "The president of the United States had declared a policy: Atoms for World Peace. I think it was Eisenhower. He sent our envoys around the world, spreading the word of the peaceful atom. We were going to lift up mankind! We were going to take the burden, the sweat, and the toil off the shoulders of humanity!" His voice booms, with either conviction or irony, or perhaps both. "The splitting of the atom was going to save the earth! We thought it would be a patriotic thing to develop nuclear power.

"The main thing was leadership. Pasco was a small city, Kennewick was a small city, Richland was dominated by the big corporations. They're here today and gone tomorrow. Not us! We're here. We lived here, we had our money invested here, our future was here."

One enduring indication of Lee's influence involves the use of the word "dump" in reference to nuclear wastes. He picked up the paper one afternoon several years ago and saw a headline that read N-WASTE DUMP. In short order, a notice appeared on the newsroom bulletin board to the effect that, whatever it's called elsewhere, in the *Tri-City Herald* it's a storage site.

The *Herald* has been a sometimes manic promoter of growth in general and nuclear growth in particular. As such, the paper reflected as much as it shaped the communities it serves. Nuclear power may have its problems elsewhere, but it enjoys unflagging sup-

**'The Herald has been
a sometimes manic promoter
of nuclear growth.
As such, the paper
reflected as much as it
shaped the
communities it serves'**

port in the Tri-Cities. Civic leaders hope to see Hanford develop into the world's largest nuclear energy center, with twenty or even forty reactors, and permanent storage sites for the nation's nuclear wastes (most of which are already in temporary storage at Hanford). Richland bills itself as "The Atomic Capital of the Nation." A local high school calls its sports teams The Bombers; the school's symbol is a mushroom cloud. Half a dozen businesses use "atomic" in their names. You can drive down Argon, Proton, or Nuclear Avenues. When Ralph Nader came to the Tri-Cities for a debate a few years ago, more than 500 people demonstrated in support of nuclear power, while a counterdemonstration attracted a scant thirty. Even the local chapter of the Sierra Club is pro-nuclear.

In the early days, Richland was owned and operated by the government, and it was swaddled in secrecy. The town was plastered with signs warning residents not to talk to strangers. Houses or apartments couldn't be rented without security clearances. Telephones were

routinely tapped by the FBI. It was a federal offense to talk about or publish anything stamped "secret," and nearly everything was stamped secret. The newspaper could report the cost of new projects and the number of people that would be hired, but very little else.

The Hanford Reservation continues to be what one frustrated *Herald* reporter calls an "information fortress." The reservation is overseen by the federal Department of Energy, with various projects being operated by nine private contractors and the Washington Public Power Supply System; most of them maintain a public relations staff that serves as a buffer between sources of information and reporters. Access to sources is tightly controlled. Public relations people sit in on all interviews. Reporters must pass a security clearance and be issued an identification badge before being allowed on the premises, and they must be accompanied by an escort at all times.

By way of contrast, promotional information about nuclear power is dispensed freely. The *Herald's* morgue is replete with stories about the safety, reliability, economy, and assorted other virtues of the nuclear industry. Some of the material could have been lifted from the newsletter of a hyperactive chamber of commerce. RADIATION LINKED TO GOOD HEALTH, the paper reported in an October 1981 headline over an interview with a lecturer sponsored by Rockwell Hanford, a major nuclear contractor. A-PLANTS DON'T TAINT ENVIRONMENT was the headline on a November 1981 story about research by scientists at Battelle, another contractor at Hanford. An August 1973 speech to the Nuclear Council by the president of Exxon produced N-ENERGY ONLY HOPE, SAYS EXXON OFFICIAL. Coverage of civic club luncheons generated such reports as A-PLANTS MORE RELIABLE, ROTARIANS TOLD (July 1975).

Still, the morgue is not bereft of stories unfavorable to the industry. As early as the late 1940s, the *Herald* was producing reports of cost overruns and waste in the operations of the major contractor at Hanford at the time, General Electric. Longtime editor William C. Bequette, who wrote many of those stories, vividly remembers the displeasure they engendered. "We have ways



Locking up the reservation: Established in 1943 to produce plutonium for the nation's first atomic bombs, the Hanford Reservation remains a closely guarded "information center."

of taking care of people like you," one GE official told him. "Well, I'm still here," Bequette says, chuckling.

In the 1970s, the target was the Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS), which has earned the nickname Whoops as a result of its monumental cost overruns and mismanagement (see "The Private World of Public Authorities," *CJR*, March/April). Initially, the *Herald's* coverage of WPPSS was smudged with conflicts of interest stemming from the lack of differentiation between the paper and the Nuclear Council. WPPSS was considering, often in secret meetings, the location of five nuclear power plants it was planning to build. The council wanted all the plants to be built at Hanford; WPPSS was inclined to spread them around. The power supply system's secrecy was attacked in both news columns and editorials. Eventually, WPPSS decided to build three of the plants at Hanford, and a détente was declared, during which the system bought several memberships on the council. "The Nuclear Council kept trying to get the supply system to contribute," says John Goldsbury, who lives in the Tri-Cities area and is a former president of the WPPSS board of directors. "They couldn't understand that the supply sys-

tem is controlled by public utilities, and we could only pay for direct services. Eventually, we did ask the council to do some things for us, and in return for that we bought a couple of memberships."

WPPSS joined the council in 1977 and remains a member at an annual fee of \$2,500. The union has been very fruitful, according to Goldsbury. "You have to understand that the relationship between the *Herald* and the Nuclear Council was very close. Unless the council was a party to what was going on, it was bad. But if you were having a problem and you got the attention of the council and the *Herald*, you got results. There was no question that the old editorial staff had a direct pipeline to Washington, D.C."

The paper's later coverage of WPPSS had a more independent quality. By 1976, two years before the misadventures of WPPSS began to trickle into the national press, the *Herald* was periodically reporting evidence of sloppy workmanship, safety violations, mismanagement, conflicts of interest (including the awarding of several WPPSS contracts to a heating and refrigeration company owned by board president Goldsbury), and other problems at WPPSS. Unfortunately, most of

the stories were so murky that they had little impact.

"In general, I think the *Herald* is more critical of Hanford and the nuclear industry than it gets credit for," says Todd Crowell, one of four former *Herald* reporters who now work in public relations for that industry. "It's certainly not looked upon as a smile sheet for the nuclear industry. We get mad at them just like we get mad at other newspapers."

"Some of the people who criticize the *Herald* believe nuclear power is inherently evil and that the only 'objective' posture for any newspaper is unrelenting criticism and exposure. You should remember, also, that nuclear power is a national story. Thus, a disenchanted Hanford worker with a story to tell is more likely to take it to the Seattle or even the national newspapers, knowing that his story will have more impact than if it merely appeared in the local paper. This is one reason why it sometimes appears that the out-of-town papers are doing the digging at Hanford."

While the *Herald* has clearly not ignored the bad news about nuclear power, it has tended to report it *sotto voce* more often than not — particularly under Lee's stewardship — and it has managed to squeeze good news out of



Building up WPPSS: Was the relationship between WPPSS, the Herald, and the Tri-City Nuclear Industrial Council a little too cozy?

some of the most damaging incidents.

HARRISBURG ACCIDENT COULD BENEFIT HANFORD, a banner headline reported a few days after the late-March 1979 accident in the nuclear power plant at Three Mile Island (six months before McClatchy bought the paper). The story quoted an official of the Tri-City Nuclear Industrial Council as saying that although the accident proved that nuclear power is safe, the public probably wouldn't realize that, and consequently there would be more interest in building new plants in isolated places such as Hanford.

When federal officials conceded in 1977 that almost two tons of weapons-grade plutonium and enriched uranium, including 2,829 pounds of plutonium produced at Hanford, couldn't be accounted for, the *Herald* remained serene. A story headlined PLUTONIUM ACCOUNTING PRAISED pointed out that the missing material amounted to less than 1 percent of the total plutonium produced. A subsequent editorial ob-

served, blandly, that "anyone who has done any cooking can appreciate the difficulty of accounting for every fraction of a gram of plutonium."

The paper assured its readers that N-LEAK SHOWS SAFETY FACTOR AT CENTER shortly after 116,000 gallons of radioactive wastes leaked from an underground storage tank at Hanford in 1973. The story quoted Bob Philip, then president of both the newspaper and the Nuclear Council, as saying that Hanford "can and should be used as a regional nuclear energy center," because it "can contain man's occasional mistake without harm to the region or its people."

The *Herald* today is not the cheerleader it once was. Stories about leaks and various other mishaps at Hanford are more likely to be reported with objectivity rather than reassurance. (A recent edition included eight local and wire stories related to nuclear power, and none of them could be considered favorable.) And there is more of

an effort to separate the *Herald* and the Nuclear Council, whose activities now receive less regular coverage and fewer editorial plaudits. Even so, the *Herald* continues to support the council ("If there was ever a need for the Nuclear Council, it would be today," concluded a February 21, 1982, editorial), and nuclear power in general. And the paper still commits sizable resources to promotional efforts, including the publication of an annual "Progress" edition that consists of some 230 pages of unadulterated boosterism.

Former energy writer Jim Dullenty, who is openly sympathetic to the nuclear industry, thinks it receives "blatantly unfair treatment" in other media, compared to "balanced" coverage in the *Herald*. Dullenty spent six years at the paper, five as energy writer. He resigned in April to become editor of *True West* magazine. A portly, forty-one-year-old veteran journalist, he frequently wrote rebuttals to what he considered slanted or inaccurate stories appearing else-

where, regardless of whether they were published in the *Herald*. He believed it was his "duty" to do so. Other writers say the practice nourished the paper's reputation as a nuclear apologist.

"When we get a tip on something going on at Hanford that shouldn't be, we're very thorough in our investigation before we put anything into print," Dullenty said in an interview shortly before he resigned, "because we're cognizant of the fact that some of these things might be very damaging to the industry. I've bent over backwards to be fair to the nuclear industry. But I've never felt any pressure to do so. The pressure has been to be anti-nuclear."

Political writer Larry Ganders is among those on the staff who believe the *Herald* remains too sensitive to the nuclear industry and to industry in general. Ganders, twenty-five, went to work for the paper right after graduating with journalistic honors from Washington State University in 1978. A couple of years ago, he wrote an economic review story which came to the conclusion that the Tri-Cities had reached the end of its boom, having just experienced its first year of no growth. The story was spiked. Ganders attributes that to a continuing "booster mentality."

"I still see something on page one and wonder what it's doing there," he says. "I think we still flack for the nuclear industry a little too much."

"I think we downplay a lot of stories that are damaging to the nuclear industry," agrees Chuck Taylor, another young reporter, who is president of the local Sigma Delta Chi chapter. "If Hanford gets a new contract, that goes on page one. Some adverse development, that goes inside. Nuclear power is not a clear-cut sacred cow here. It's not so blatant that stories get killed. But I don't think we cover it in enough depth — we get the breaking stuff, but we don't dig — and I don't think we often enough get the other side of the story."

In covering an anti-nuclear initiative campaign last fall, for example, the *Herald* carried seven local stories dealing with objections to the initiative, compared to one story and a sidebar presenting the supporters' side, and one story about both positions. The initiative, requiring voter approval before bonds could be issued to build power

plants, was inspired by the WPPSS debacle. It was approved by the state as a whole but rejected by an 80 percent margin in the Tri-Cities area.

"Part of the explanation [for the one-sided coverage] is that just about everybody in this area was opposed to the initiative," says political writer Ganders. "But my concern was what if this thing passes? Most of the state seems to be going for it, and we don't even know where the supporters are coming from, what they're saying. So I suggested I go to Seattle and talk to some folks. The editors didn't think it was that important."

"I offered to use the company car and make the trip in one day, to save on a motel. They said no. Well, if I think

**'Former energy writer
Jim Dullenty
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something's part of my job, I want to do it, you know? I was on the political beat, and my job was to cover the campaign. So I said, all right, I've got a day off coming. I'll go down there on my own time. Would you run it then? They said yeah, okay. I did the story and they ran it, but it ran well inside and it was heavily edited."

The McClatchy organization, known for a liberal bent, has thus far had little perceptible impact on the *Herald*, but that may change in the coming months. In March, publisher Kelso Gillenwater hired forty-one-year-old Rich Petersen, former assistant managing editor of the McClatchy-owned Sacramento *Bee*, as executive editor, to take over the newsroom duties of veteran editor Bill Bequette. Gillenwater is widely praised by the staff as being approachable, energetic, and responsive. He has a news background and is thus more sensitive to the needs of the newsroom than Glenn Lee, a quintessential businessman.

Later this summer, a VDT system

will replace the *Herald's* twenty-year-old manual typewriters; a new press (actually a ten-year-old model inherited from the *Bee*) will go into operation at the same time. The technological changes will be accompanied by new type faces and packaging. "It's been a good newspaper," Gillenwater insists. "We want to make it a great newspaper."

Bill Bequette, who remains on the staff as editor of the editorial page, has worked at the *Herald* since 1948. He looks back on all those years and sees a little too much credulity, not quite enough aggressiveness. He also sees the constraints: a small staff, limited budget, a legacy of secrecy, lack of diversity of opinion in the community.

"I'm sure there probably were times when we weren't as aggressive as we might have been," Bequette says. "It's hard to shake the reticence that was built up from the start. It was something that was there for a long time. Even as late as Three Mile Island, we wondered just how much play should we give it. Should we bring it out on page one? Give it the shot which it seemed to rate? Or was it something we should play down, because it looked like it was bad for the nuclear industry?"

"I'm glad to say our decision was to give it what it seemed to be worth. One thing we've had to realize is that you can't paint a picture any different than it is. If you do, your credibility's shot to hell."

"I read the exchange papers, and it seems to me that we've made maybe as many mistakes, but maybe not more, than most other papers. I'm sure we gave more emphasis to things that were going on out at Hanford, especially the positive things, than we would have if this community wasn't heavily dependent on Hanford. And we gave a lot of space to irrigation, farming, other developments that are bread and butter to this community. I just hope that when the negative came along, we had the guts to print that too. Most of the time we did. But there probably were lapses, somewhere along the line."

"We've been an advocate for Hanford, for nuclear power, and I suspect we will continue to be. Do you turn around and bite the hand that feeds you?" ■

ISSUES...

Trucking industry issues may seem at times too specialized for general news coverage. But there always is a story there that directly affects every American. Trucks are the only type of transportation for carrying goods to and from every community on the map. Trucks are really a public utility that reaches everyone. They are as vital, necessary and dependable as the local power and telephone companies. The trucking industry sees these major issues this year and American Trucking Associations welcome the opportunity to discuss the industry position on each one:

HIGHWAYS

There is no question that America's highways are wearing out and that funds are not available for continued construction and much needed repair and maintenance. The trucking industry is developing recommendations to preserve the \$300 billion invested in the national road system since 1922.

It's time the \$8 billion balance in the federal Highway Trust Fund be used for highway projects. The money in the fund that is available for highway aid has been collected exclusively through taxes on only those who use the highways.

HIGHWAY TAXATION

The popular and unproved theory of highway wear puts the blame on truck traffic. This is myth, not fact. The problem is muddled by bleeding heart railroads which would prefer to direct attention to highways rather than explain to Congress whatever happened to millions of acres in land grants. The trucking industry is willing to pay its fair share of increased highway costs but declines to be penalized for taxes in excess of its fair share.

IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY

A more productive method of moving goods by truck is the use of 65-foot twin trailers, a highly efficient means of moving truck freight which has been standard practice in 34 states for years. This doesn't mean heavier trucks or bigger trucks. In some cases the total length may be a few feet longer. However, in every case it means less urban congestion, more fuel saved, and helping to hold the line on prices. The industry invites the remaining seventeen states to join in allowing this safe form of transport.

ERISA

This is the acronym for a federal pension law the 1980 amendments to which penalize the trucking company and other companies in multi-employer pension plans. Complicated and sure to be emotional, the current law needs overhauling to protect worker and manager alike.

COLLECTIVE RATEMAKING

Congress thought so much of this concept that it overrode a Harry Truman veto. Collective ratemaking permits both motor carriers and shippers to propose prices for shipping freight to every point in the nation. Participation is voluntary. Proposed rates are subject to federal approval. Now a Motor Carrier Ratemaking Study Commission will report to Congress January 1, 1983 with its recommendations for the future of collective ratemaking. The deregulationists are urging that the Commission recommend the elimination of collective ratemaking. Efficient motor carrier transportation requires the continuation of collective ratemaking.

CANADA/MEXICO

Border barriers in Mexico and Canada inhibit U.S. trucking companies' operations in those countries. But, the Interstate Commerce Commission (the U.S. agency which approves truck operations here) has refused to consider these restrictions to U.S. carriers when granting permission to foreign carriers to operate in the U.S. The potential impact on U.S. jobs and commerce is being ignored by an unfair government.

For details or comments on these issues (or others) contact: News Service, (202) 797-5237, or Broadcasting Service, (202) 797-5234; American Trucking Associations, Inc., 1616 P Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.



Remember . . . "If you've got it, a truck brought it!"

Blowing the lid off Tijuana

A maverick editor gives Mexico its first taste of give-'em-hell reporting

by LARRY REMER

Tension builds as the newspaper-laden van, heading south on I-5 out of San Diego, approaches the Mexican border. As if the contents were contraband instead of the popular Tijuana newspaper, *Zeta*, the driver prepares for a possible confrontation with Mexican border authorities. For *Zeta* is no ordinary Mexican newspaper. Rather, as the brainchild of the embattled Baja California editor, Jesus Blancornelas, it is the embodiment of the fight for a free press south of the border.

Zeta's publication of a steady stream of muckraking exposés and criticisms of government officials is virtually unprecedented in Mexican journalism. Blancornelas can get away with this because of the proximity of the U.S. border and the support he enjoys from the U.S. press. In fact, this past Christmas Eve Mexican authorities seized an entire print run of *Zeta* as it was entering the country; only an outcry in the San Diego dailies forced the Mexican government to release the paper and lift the ban on its importation.

To say that Mexico frowns on journalists who probe into the seamy side of the country's political and economic establishment is an understatement. Back in the 1950s, when Manuel Acosta Meza, a columnist for the weekly *El Imparcial* in Tijuana, began a campaign against corruption involving the city's vice rackets, he was machine-gunned down on his doorstep. In 1963, Carlos Asprade Sastre, a politician turned journalist, met a similar fate when he drew on his inside knowledge of governmental corruption for a series of col-

umns in Tijuana's *Las Noticias*. And such happenings have not been confined to Tijuana. In Sinolua in 1978 reporter Roberto Martinez Montenegro was gunned down; the next year a reporter for *Excelsior* in Mexico City had his car firebombed after writing articles criticizing the governor of Guerrero.

Against this backdrop, Blancornelas and a group of journalists in late 1977 launched *ABC*, *Zeta's* forerunner, with the intention of blazing a trail for investigative reporting in the Mexican press. *ABC* — the initials stand for Adelante ["Forward"], Baja California — took aim at the pervasive corruption in Tijuana's political and economic life, seeking to show how it had hamstrung efforts to ameliorate the city's substantial and worsening social and economic ills. A fast-paced, hard-hitting paper, *ABC* rapidly became Tijuana's largest daily, with a circulation of more than 50,000.

In short order, Blancornelas had locked horns with the most powerful figure in the region, Baja Governor Roberto de la Madrid. Soon thereafter, in the fall of 1979, a union under de la Madrid's political control seized *ABC*, and two months later Blancornelas was forced into temporary exile when allies of the governor on the *ABC* board accused him of embezzling \$70,000 from the paper's stockholders.

In response, Blancornelas took his case to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, to Amnesty International, and to leading U.S. newspapers. As a result of the pressure thus generated, de la Madrid agreed last year to have the Mexican courts drop their charges against Blancornelas so that he could return to the country. Blancornelas, forty-five, lives today in Tijuana, overseeing *Zeta's* editorial staff from a sparsely furnished office near the famous Agua Caliente racetrack.

What distinguished *ABC* and distinguishes *Zeta* from the rest of the Mexican press is Blancornelas's refusal to go along with the traditional system of privilege, favoritism, and outright bribery that permeates press/government relations south of the border. The government controls the importation and

sale of newsprint, and both the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and various government agencies are large newspaper advertisers. Furthermore, government officials often hold hidden ownership interests in major newspapers.

Even more insidious are the direct payoffs to editors and reporters. "The corruption of the press is right out in the open," says Laurie Becklund, who has covered Mexico for almost ten years, first for the *San Diego Evening Tribune* and now for the *Los Angeles Times*. "I have been at official Mexican dinners where every reporter present received an envelope with cash inside. During political campaigns, the PRI goes out and buys coverage. They pay, say, \$25,000 [to a newspaper] for their coverage of a race. During the Lopez Portillo campaign [for the presidency], the Mexican reporters on the trail received free room and board. I saw one reporter being paid for how many words he wrote."

These charges are echoed by Blancornelas, who came up through the system only to rebel against it when, as editor of the Baja daily *La Voz*, he was fired for being too critical of then-Governor Milton Castellano; unbeknownst to Blancornelas, Castellano held a hidden interest in the paper. "The major problem for Mexico," Blancor-

Editor Jesus Blancornelas



Paula Kriener

Larry Remer is editor of the weekly San Diego Newline.

nelas says, "is the Big Corruption. And the press is part of this Big Corruption."

When Blancornelas and *ABC* brought U.S.-style muckraking journalism to Tijuana, knowledgeable observers predicted their quick demise. What they underestimated was the importance of the U.S. media in the equation. Drawn by *ABC*'s willingness to probe for some of the rawest nerve endings in Mexican society, U.S. reporters trooped to the *ABC* editorial offices. They had been sent south by U.S. editors eager to understand the importance of the new oil giant on our southern border; when they tired of official pronouncements that proved hollow, they turned to *ABC*. There, they found both kindred journalistic spirits and a copious flow of information about the way Mexico and Tijuana were governed — or misgoverned. With banner headlines and pictures of bloodied victims, for example, Blancornelas and his staff reported incidents in which the Mexican judicial police had beaten and tortured prisoners. *ABC* accused high government officials of corruption, the police of trafficking in drugs and protecting drug smugglers, and municipal officials of massive indifference to the lack of health care facilities and public services for the ever-growing population of Tijuana.

Many of these stories were picked up by the U.S. press, and, later, when Blancornelas lost control of *ABC*, many of these same reporters went to bat for him. "I am alive now," he says, "thanks to the American press and the closeness of the border."

Although *ABC* faced an almost complete boycott by business and government advertisers, it had enormous popular acceptance. "I can recall being in the *ABC* office when there were lines of twelve or fifteen people waiting to see Blanco," says Laurie Becklund. "They were people who had open sewer lines in front of their homes that nobody would fix; people whose water had been turned off who couldn't get it back on without bribing the right official. And *ABC* would go out and do the story and, in their own way, they'd single out the official responsible for criticism and even ridicule."

ABC's irreverence and scathing humor were a critical factor in bringing de la Madrid's wrath down on the paper.

The governor was upbraided for putting thirty-two members of his family in government positions, for property acquisitions in the U.S. and Mexico, and for accepting payoffs from vice racketeers. Yet it was only when *ABC* columnist Hector Felix began to lampoon de la Madrid, calling him "Bob" from "Gringolandia" (a reference to the governor's birth in the U.S. that played on Mexican nationalism), that de la Madrid struck back. Referring to Blancornelas as "an insect," he declared, "We all know how to get rid of insects — with insecticide." Most of the rest of the Mexican press, siding with de la Madrid, denounced Blancornelas as a CIA agent, "mentally deranged," a traitor to his country, and a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

Then, in 1979, a handful of *ABC* employees signed with the Sindicato de Trabajadores, a sand-haulers' union controlled by the PRI. Even though a majority of *ABC*'s workers joined another union, the state government recognized the sindicato as the legitimate bargaining agent for the paper's employees. The union set the stage for a strike with a series of demands, including a 300 percent increase in wages, that Blancornelas could not meet. In the early dawn of November 2, 1979, 250 members of the union stormed the *ABC* offices and seized the paper while Mexican judicial police stood by. The next week, with the governor's personal attorney presiding, *ABC*'s board ousted Blancornelas as president. Soon afterward, facing charges of embezzlement, he went into exile.

Roberto de la Madrid has repeatedly insisted that he played no direct role in the demise of *ABC*. Francisco de la Madrid, the governor's brother and the powerful director of customs at the Tijuana port of entry, has told several U.S. reporters that the spat between Blancornelas and the governor is a personal one, that Blancornelas initially supported de la Madrid but broke with him when the governor refused to take his advice. Blancornelas admits that *ABC* was sympathetic to de la Madrid when he originally emerged as a candidate. But, says Blancornelas, *ABC* became disillusioned when the governor

failed to live up to his promises to reform the government and, instead, began participating in "the Big Corruption." In any case, no knowledgeable observers in Tijuana, even those critical of Blancornelas, will admit to seriously believing that the takeover of *ABC* was accomplished without de la Madrid's backing. And, says Blancornelas, nobody has successfully challenged the veracity of his reporting. "Even with everything that they've said about us and everything that they've written, they haven't been able to say that any of it was inaccurate."

In *Zeta*, Blancornelas has continued his eclectic brand of investigative reporting. A recent issue decried the salary earned by a government minister — 500,000 pesos per month (about \$12,500) — and carried an exposé of a new tax system that would quadruple property taxes in Baja, at least for those who don't bribe their way out of paying. In the same issue, Blancornelas criticized Mexican President Lopez Portillo for having 120 people in his entourage when he went to Nicaragua last winter. Hamstrung by a lack of capital and the need to print in the U.S., *Zeta* has managed to achieve a circulation of only 10,000. In February, devaluation of the peso by nearly 50 percent forced *Zeta* to shift from daily to weekly publication to save money. Advertising is sparse. But, says Blancornelas, "We can publish based on our sales. We will publish if we have to print on toilet paper."

While Blancornelas has an astute, some say intuitive, feel for the political jugular, his friends describe him as ideologically naive. The whitewashed walls of the *Zeta* offices are adorned not with revolutionary posters, but with a simple calendar and a crucifix. When *ABC* was seized, both the left (led by the Communist Party) and the right (led by the Party of National Action) supported Blancornelas with large, joint demonstrations in the streets of Tijuana. When asked to describe his political philosophy, he says, "I am not PRI, nor PPS [Popular Socialist Party], nor Communist Party, but one thing very special — a journalist. At the newspaper, I open the doors to the people of the left, the people of the right, and the people of the center. I seek only to write with common sense." ■

A Special Report on America's Chemical Industry

Pollution control and hazardous waste: Where do we stand?

The wizardry of chemistry: It's behind some of the longest strides made by man. Modern "alchemists" turn base materials like oil, natural gas, coal and salt into miracle drugs for better health...fertilizers and insecticides

America's Chemical Industry...

- Employs 1.1 million people working at 12,000 plant sites across the country.
- Ranks as the nation's fifth largest manufacturing industry, with sales in 1981 of \$185 billion.
- Stands second among manufacturing industries in values of exports, with exports totaling \$21.2 billion in 1981.

for better crops...fibers for better clothing and home furnishings...plastics for an endless variety of other products.

Yet this progress has also produced problems. Some chemical uses and disposal practices have created environmental, health and safety effects. These have led to a state of public concern best summed up by the word "chemophobia."

People wonder what the industry is doing about the risks associated with chemicals. The answer is encouraging. Our society can enjoy the benefits of chemicals without unacceptable risks.

The leader in pollution control.

The chemical industry accounts for 22% of all pollution control expenditures by U.S. manufacturing industries, according to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau statistics. This places the industry in the top position in this crucial field. So far, more than \$13 billion

has been spent by the industry to curb air and water pollution alone and an additional \$10.9 billion is expected to be spent by 1985.

These expenditures are paying off: A recent survey shows that nearly 100 percent of chemical plants are in compliance with, or on schedule in meeting, government air and water quality standards.

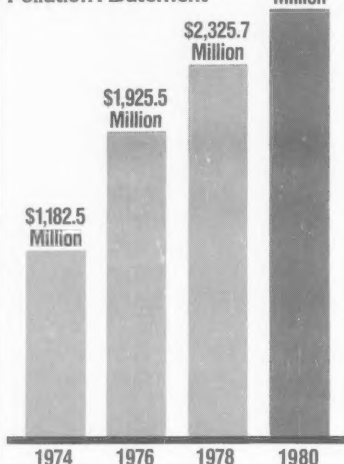
The chemical industry's programs are part of a nationwide effort yielding measurable improvements in air and water quality.

Nationwide, air quality is noticeably better. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, sulfur dioxide in large urban areas dropped 67% from 1964 to 1979 and carbon monoxide fell 36% between 1972 and 1979.

Water quality also is getting better. The EPA says it has found more than 70 examples of clear-cut improvements in water quality

Special Report:

America's Chemical Industry
Capital Expenditures
and Operating Costs for
Pollution Abatement



(Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census)

in streams from Hawaii to Maine and from Alaska to Texas.

Meeting America's waste problems.

To put the picture in perspective, our entire society produces waste. The total amounts to a staggering 4.5 billion tons each year. *One percent* is estimated to be hazardous. It's an undesirable, but manageable by-product of modern life. Certainly, without proper management, it could pose a threat to human health or the environment.

Who's responsible for hazardous waste? According to the Environmental Protection Agency, 23 industries produce hazardous waste. The chemical industry is one. Government facilities, hospitals and research laboratories are among other major sources.

Both the chemical industry and the federal government have undertaken new programs to fix strict accountability for those who generate, transport and dispose of hazardous waste. The heart of the new system is a manifest procedure that enables the waste gener-

ator or the government to track every load of hazardous waste sent from plant premises to eventual disposal.

New laws now govern virtually every detail of how generators of chemical waste manage such by-products. These statutes put the nation on the road to cleaning up old waste disposal sites and preventing future waste problems.

Over the years, the chemical industry has developed new waste-disposal technology, such as the concept of secure landfills, and altered production processes to reduce waste. It has established industry-wide standards for waste disposal and is studying new technology for the future—such as incineration in combustible drums and incineration at sea.

Chemical industry commits \$10 billion to waste control.

The chemical industry is backing its war on waste with increased spending. An estimated \$10 billion will be invested during the next five

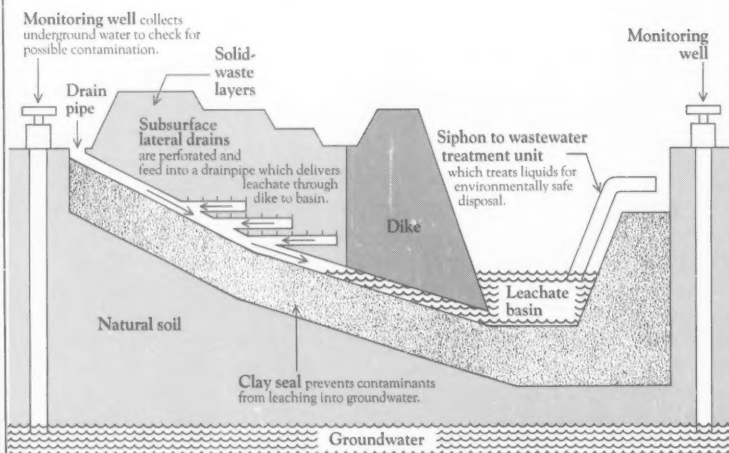
years to upgrade treatment and disposal facilities and to secure old disposal sites. An additional \$2.3 billion will be required annually for operating costs. These expenditures are in addition to the \$15.3 billion the industry has already spent for pollution control.

Advances also seen in other safety areas.

The chemical industry is working to reduce risks in other areas of concern as well. That's a point made by Robert A. Roland, president of the Chemical Manufacturers Association, the trade group representing the industry: "Chemical companies are striving to improve every facet of their operations to provide maximum benefits and minimum risks to people and the environment."

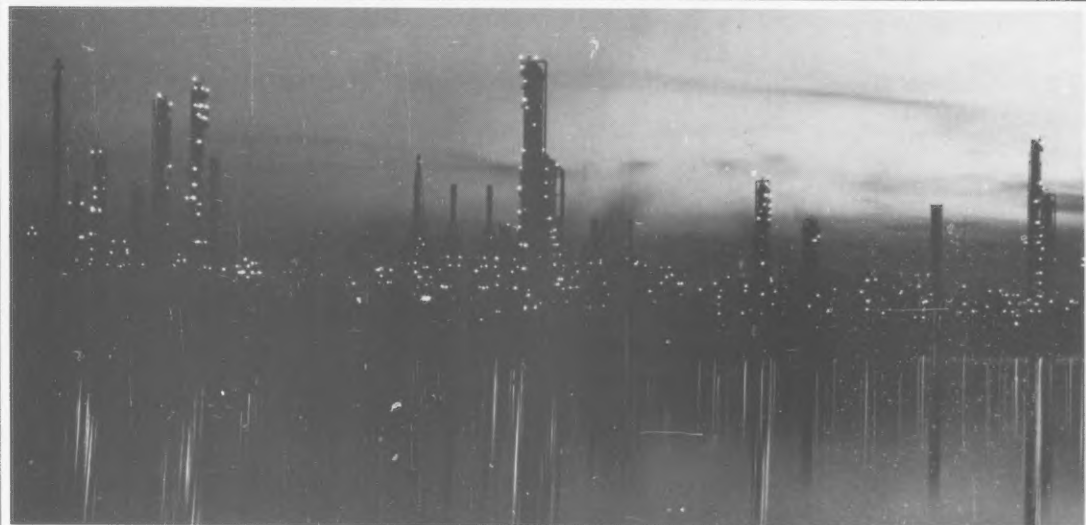
How is this being accomplished? To quote Roland again: "By painstaking research to assure the safety of products long before they reach consumers. By instituting elaborate precautions in the workplace to protect employees

Secure Chemical Landfill



Depending on the solid waste, the chemical industry selects disposal techniques such as incineration, by-product recovery, stabilization or secure landfill design to protect the environment.

Special Report:



Chemical plants like this one are approaching 100 percent compliance with government air and water quality standards, reflecting the industry's first-place position in pollution control.

from potentially harmful substances. By placing special emphasis on reclaiming and recycling usable by-products. And by transporting finished products in containers specially designed to withstand the rigors of travel."

Improving Product Safety

As recently as the early 1960s, scientists were able to detect potentially hazardous impurities in parts per *million*. Today, impurities in some chemicals can be detected in parts per *trillion*. That's like measuring one grain of salt in an olympic-size swimming pool.

Armed with such sophisticated detection technology, American chemical companies are constantly at work testing the safety of new and existing chemicals. And this testing goes on for years. A group of companies recently spent \$14 million to build a totally independent research facility, the C.I.I.T.—the Chemical Industry Institute of Toxicology—in North Carolina.

Worker Safety—No. 1

The safety of employees is one of the chemical industry's prime con-

cerns. Evidence of this commitment shows up in the latest survey of the National Safety Council: The chemical industry ranks No. 1. Since 1975, the industry has climbed from sixth place to first in worker safety. Today, a chemical worker in the United States is *four times* as safe as the average American industrial worker.

The industry continues devel-

oping many approaches to improve worker health and safety. One recent example is a new line of monitoring devices that alert workers to possible contaminants in the workplace atmosphere.

Upgrading Transportation Safety

The industry has made great strides in transporting chemicals

A personal interest in improved water quality



"Clean water is one of our most precious resources," says Larry Washington, Manager of Environmental Services for a major chemical company. "The chemical industry has more than 10,000

specialists like me working to control pollution and protect the environment.

"One of my responsibilities is to make sure the wastewater discharges from our plant are environmentally acceptable. That means removing suspended solids and using techniques such as carbon adsorption, filtration and biological treatment. It can also mean raising the oxygen content of the water, so there's more than enough to support fish in the river.

"My family and I live in the same city my plant's in. I've got a personal stake in making sure we do things right at my plant."

Special Report:



New chemical tank cars incorporate "shelf couplers," head shields and other refinements to minimize potential damage in the event of rail accidents.

safely. More than 90 million shipments of hazardous materials are made each year in the U.S.—and only *one one-hundredths of one percent* are involved in accidental releases.

When there *is* an accident, quick action is a necessity. One phone call to a central service provides immediate information on the nature of chemicals involved in accidents to emergency personnel such as firemen. CHEMTREC, a round-the-clock emergency information service set up by the industry, provides such information on more than 35,000 chemical products.

The chemical connection...to you.

Chemicals play a vital role in the

daily lives of all Americans. For example:

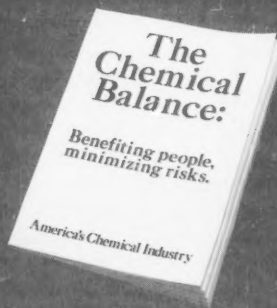
- More than 40 percent of all goods and services rely in some way on chemicals.
- The pharmaceutical industry, using chemicals, has developed modern medicines that have made diseases such as diphtheria, polio, smallpox and whooping cough medical rarities.
- Without chemical fertilizers and pesticides, America's food production would be cut by 30 percent. Another 25 percent would spoil on the way to market without chemical protection.
- Chemically based fibers currently provide 75 percent of all fibers used in domestic textile mills for apparel, home furnishings and industrial products.

Effective action from a concerned industry.

Chemical companies are doing more to protect the environment and manage risks than almost any other industry. Even so, its leaders readily admit that there are still problems. As CMA President Roland puts it: "Ours is an innovative, able, dynamic industry—one whose products enhance our way of life and strengthen our nation. Although rapid industrialization created some of our present problems, our use of more sophisticated sciences is helping us solve these—now and in the future."

For more information.

For a copy of a new special report on these and other developments contact CMA News Service, Dept. WC-205, 2501 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037, or telephone (202) 887-1222. The News Service can also arrange interviews for you with appropriate industry experts.



America's Chemical Industry

The member companies of the Chemical Manufacturers Association

'Til newsrooms do us part

When two journalists marry, they may find themselves up against tough union-busting policies they didn't bargain for

by BERNICE BURESH

It was a classic newsroom romance. Bill Ryberg was the night city editor and Linda Anderson the day city editor at the *Quad-City Times* in Davenport, Iowa. They met on the job, fell in love, and decided to get married. When they told their editor the good news, he said, according to Linda Ryberg, "Well, which one of you is going to quit?" We were just kind of floored," she recalls. "It was a happy time for us up until that moment."

What the Rybergs hadn't realized was that the newspaper's personnel policy prohibited the employment of husbands and wives, and that by marrying they would, in effect, lose their status as two independent professionals.

They pleaded their case with the publisher, but they were not exempted from the policy. So Linda quit and went across the Mississippi River to Illinois to work as a reporter for the Rock Island, Illinois, *Argus* — at a \$75-a-week pay cut.

That was in 1974. Today Bill is the Davenport area bureau manager for *The Des Moines Register* and Linda is at home caring for three small children. But the *Times*'s policy on couples remains pristinely intact. "We do not allow married couples, period," says Fred Hunt, Jr., the paper's personnel director. "If two employees get married, one must go, prior to the marriage. But we don't say which one goes."

Not all anti-nepotism policies are that

restrictive, but policies in one form or another are pervasive enough in the newspaper industry to constitute a sort of twilight zone for journalists who want to be married to each other and work in the same geographic area. The policies are supposed to permit supervisors to hire, fire, assign, schedule, and promote workers without having to worry about what a nearby spouse or close relative might think. They are also intended to prevent spouses from supervising each other and from practicing, or being accused of practicing, favoritism. Still, as the number of married couples in journalism increases, along with the number of one-newspaper towns, a timely ques-

tion is surfacing: Is there work after marriage? For a substantial number of couples — or at least for one-half of the couple — the frustrating answer is, no.

Experiences of journalist couples around the country who have come up against anti-nepotism policies may be helpful to others who may be contemplating newsroom marriages. Here are some thoughts and suggestions:

Live together, but don't get married. Your mother might not like it, but it's okay with newspaper managers.

Donna Weatherly and Bert Rohrer had worked together for about a decade



Bernice Buresh, a former Boston bureau chief for Newsweek, is an associate professor of journalism at Boston University.

on *The Virginian-Pilot* in Norfolk when they began living together in the 1970s. The trouble started in 1978, when they decided to get married. The couple had been friendly with the managing editor and he had visited them in their home — yet at mention of their marriage plans, Weatherly recalls, the managing editor “turned ashen. He said he’d have to check with Corporate Personnel on the policy. I said, ‘What policy? There are married people and fathers and sons all over the corporation.’ I thought, there can’t possibly be any policy. It’s surely not going to apply retroactively. I couldn’t conceive of it.”

Shortly before their wedding Weatherly and Rohrer were told that at papers owned by Landmark Communications, Inc., a husband and a wife could not work at the same newspaper, and that one of them had ninety days in which to

‘At mention of their marriage plans, the managing editor turned ashen’

resign. They took their case up with the managing editor’s superior and received a reprieve: one of the two could transfer to one of the company’s other news operations.

At the time, Rohrer was a reporter in Norfolk and Weatherly was the Portsmouth-Chesapeake city editor. Weatherly moved to the evening paper, *The Ledger-Star*. How did they decide who would bite the bullet? “Basically, we flipped a coin,” Weatherly says. “It was not something either of us wanted to do.”

Subsequently, Rohrer took a job as a reporter with *The Minneapolis Star*; Weatherly went to the copy desk of *The Minneapolis Tribune*; and today *The Virginian-Pilot*, according to its publisher, Perry Morgan, is considering a more flexible policy that would not penalize employees who make their living arrangements legal. (The policy, however, will not extend to the hiring of a spouse or of married couples.)

At the *Quad-City Times*, too, says personnel director Fred Hunt, living together does not constitute a fault: “When people live together the legality is not there,” he says. “There’s nothing legal about it. As far as we’re concerned, we don’t know about it.”

“We don’t say anything about people living together,” says James Naughton, associate managing editor for news at *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. “We don’t want to be social policy.”

If you feel you must get married, find out what the policies are in advance.

Tom Mueller and Maggie Menard-Mueller lived together when they were employed at the *Quad-City Times*. After witnessing what happened to the Rybergs, they realized there was no way they could get married while working at the paper. Four and a half years ago each applied to the *Milwaukee Sentinel*. Menard, who was interviewed first, asked the editors whether there was an anti-nepotism policy. There wasn’t. Both were hired and the editors knew that they were a couple. They married in Wisconsin.

Mueller says that the only time their relationship has had any bearing on their work at the *Sentinel* was when he was on the copy desk. “They tried not to have me edit my wife’s stories,” he says. But he adds that when things got hectic, he occasionally had to. Now Mueller is the *Sentinel*’s wire editor and Menard-Mueller is the farm editor. “You could say they’re just more grown up about it here,” Mueller says.

Try the long shots, but understand that they are risky.

In 1968, Michael G. Gartner was assistant page-one editor at *The Wall Street Journal* and was about to be promoted to editor of the page. He and Barbara McCoy, a copy editor, announced that they were getting married and were told that one of them would have to leave. “I offered to resign,” Gartner says. “They changed the rule.”

On the other hand, a job gamble may not pay off. Sharon Sexton was a UPI reporter in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, while her husband, Thomas Ferrick, Jr., worked in that city for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. When her husband was about

to be transferred to Philadelphia in 1980, she quit her job and free-lanced, trying to edge her way into the tough Philadelphia market.

She approached the *Inquirer*’s James Naughton about a job. Naughton told her he could never put her on staff but suggested that as a temporary solution she try for a full-time stringer’s job in the Wilmington, Delaware, bureau. Sexton had a successful year as a stringer. Her copy was well displayed. Naughton says, “We very much valued her work.” Still, the staff job in Philadelphia that she had hoped for did not come through. Sexton went to work for the *Baltimore News American* and she and her husband now live in Wilmington, within commuting distance of both papers.

Naughton says his hands were tied. *The Inquirer* does not force resignations in the event of an in-house marriage, but it stands firm on its policy prohibiting the hiring of spouses. It’s a policy that Naughton basically supports. “Even if we don’t hire spouses, there will be several sets of spouses on a newspaper this size,” he says. “The more couples there are, the more limitations there are as to who works for whom. The more couples that exist, the more complications there are in the newsroom.”

Forget about suing.

“I called the ACLU to see if there was any chance of their helping us,” says Linda Ryberg regarding the *Quad-City Times*’s policy. “They said they had the same policy in their office, so they weren’t much help. We talked to lawyers and we were told that if we wanted to file a suit, it would cost a lot of money and we would probably lose.”

Managers are quick to point out that they don’t apply anti-nepotism rules in a sexually discriminatory way. And, as Kenneth Ross, director of employee relations for the *Los Angeles Daily News*, notes, “The California statute on employment discrimination specifically states that if an employer has legitimate business reasons for a policy preventing married couples from working together, it [the statute] does not apply.”

“The nub,” says Donna Weatherly, formerly of *The Virginian-Pilot*, “is that, basically, married couples are not a protected minority.”

Face the fact that anti-nepotism policies tend to work against women.

Linda Ryberg says that the reason it was she who left the *Quad-City Times* was that "Bill was making more money than I was. Also, we planned to have a family eventually and I had planned to take a few years off. But I still didn't want to leave my job then."

Until August 7, 1981, Joseph and Annamarie DeCarlo, a newly married couple, worked for *The Washington Star*. When the *Star* folded, they investigated other papers but were unable to find one at which both could work. Joe went to *The San Diego Union* and Annamarie landed a job at the *Escondido Times-Advocate* thirty miles away. "I really don't know what will happen in the future," she says. "His job has the bigger salary and is the drawing card. I would probably go with his job."

Elissa Vanaver, who had had experience on two papers and was looking for a reporting job, was barred from working at *The Virginian-Pilot* because her husband was on the staff. "It's not unusual for the woman to be younger and make the lesser salary, so the man's job is more important," says Vanaver. "It just seems that the world of journalism is conspiring to say you can have a career or you can have a husband, but you can't have both."

Expect to hear lots of reasons why such policies are needed.

The Rybergs, according to Fred Hunt of the *Quad-City Times*, are a "fine example of why we have the policy. Both are great people; we hated to lose either one. They wanted us to waive the policy and they said it [marriage] wasn't going to interfere with the day and night shifts. Then Linda went to *The Argus* and within two weeks Bill wanted to go back on days. If you have two people, they want vacation time off in concert. Then it's not fair to the two people either. They're accused of partiality and this sort of thing."

"It's a pain in the ass," asserts *San Diego Union* ombudsman Alfred JaCoby, speaking from the standpoint of a supervisor who has had to manage staffers who are married to each other. JaCoby recalls that it was difficult for him to supervise a young married couple

when he was Sunday editor twenty years ago. "If I reprimanded one, the other pouted," he says. It is the *Union's* policy to attempt to transfer but not to fire people who marry, but the paper will not hire spouses or relatives of employees. JaCoby theorizes that anti-nepotism rules "came about at the time of the Depression. It was felt that no family should have more than one job."

According to Webster's Third New International Dictionary, nepotism is "favoritism shown to nephews and other relatives (as by giving them positions because of their relationship rather than on their merit)." But as Dick Ramsey, executive secretary of the con-

tracts committee of The Newspaper Guild, points out, "No nepotism rule has ever kept the relatives of the newspaper owners off the payroll. . . . I see no benefit in these policies for the employees."

Make a list of newspapers that do hire married couples.

At the top of the list go the *Des Moines Register and Tribune* and the *Los Angeles Times*, which are cheerfully acknowledged by their bosses to be veritable nests of families.

Michael Gartner, now president and editor of the *Des Moines* papers, offers one word on the supposed difficulties of



dealing with related people: "Baloney." Gartner says his papers employ "parents and children, husbands and wives, and brothers and sisters. It's wonderful. The city editor married a reporter. The managing editor of the A.M. newspaper supervises a brother who is

'We don't say anything about people living together. We don't want to be social police'

James Naughton
The Philadelphia Inquirer

telegraph editor. Two families of four people are in the newsroom and throughout the building there are all kinds of families.

"If they [couples] don't work out, you fire one of the spouses," Gartner says. "We fired a son and kept the father. I've never been aware of any problems with it."

Robert L. Flannes, vice president and assistant to the publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*, agrees. "We've always encouraged relatives to join the *Times*," he says. "It's worked out very well in the total history. We have families with several members in different departments." *Times* managing editor George

J. Cotliar says that he can recall "only one hassle within the last year." An editor married a person on his desk. "They came to me and said they were well aware of the potential problems and could handle it," he says. "It turned out it was a problem. Some of the people on the desk felt uncomfortable. Maybe they thought if they said something untoward about the editor, his wife would go home and tell him about it. We had no choice but to move her to another desk. Later she decided to leave." But, Cotliar adds, "I think that 95 percent of the time it's manageable."

The New York Times, which hardly needs promotion as a desirable place to work, also hires spouses. "We make our judgments here based on merit, not on marital status," says James L. Greenfield, assistant managing editor for personnel.

In fact, a person who wants to break into the newspaper business should try to marry a *Times* foreign correspondent, because the paper will put a free-lancing spouse under contract in the assigned country. "By and large, we do not wish them to work for the opposition," Greenfield says. "If they want to be journalists, we would prefer that they work for us, and we have a budget for that."

If all else fails, consider divorce.

Mo Mehlsak, managing editor of *Automotive Age*, was interested in applying

for a job as a business writer at the *Los Angeles Daily News*, where his wife, Barbara Riegelhaupt, was employed as a general assignment reporter. "I was planning to go to law school and wouldn't be working there much longer," says Riegelhaupt. "I wanted to write a letter of resignation three months down the road. But they said we couldn't work at the paper one day together." The couple investigated the possibility of a quickie divorce.

"They were treating marriage as a technicality," explains Riegelhaupt, "so we thought we'd treat it as a technicality, too. We thought we'd have a big party when we remarried. That's sort of extreme, but the whole policy struck us as kind of crazy."

In the end, they didn't go through with the plan. Riegelhaupt left the *Daily News* and Mehlsak was hired. She got a vacation relief job at the *Los Angeles Times*, where she worked at a much higher salary until last fall, when she enrolled in law school.

For another couple, though, there was a different ending. The woman wanted to get a job at a big-city newspaper where her husband worked, but was told she couldn't be hired because of its anti-nepotism policy. An editor told her to come back, however, if she got divorced. Later the marriage broke up, the editor made good on his offer, and the woman ended up working a few desks away from her former husband. ■



Survival journalism, Allbritton style

The Trenton Times was ailing financially when Joe Allbritton bought it. Will creeping boosterism work as a cure?

by ANTHONY DePALMA

Joe L. Allbritton, the Texas millionaire who dislikes personal publicity and shuns the press, nonetheless likes newspapers enough to buy them up. In the years since he purchased his first daily — the now-departed *Washington Star* — Allbritton has bought eight newspapers, three television stations, and one radio station, and in early April he tentatively agreed to buy the financially troubled New York *Daily News*.

Allbritton's last acquisition was *The Trenton Times*, which the Washington Post Company unloaded last October after losing money on it for three consecutive years. The day the purchase was announced, W. Dean Singleton, vice president of Allbritton Communications Company and the new president of the *Times*, said it was natural for the company to "desire control of what we perceived to be the best and most prestigious newspaper in the state."

The newspaper Joe Allbritton now owns in Trenton is only a shell of the paper Singleton praised so highly. More than half of the respected newsroom assembled by the Washington Post Company is gone, and more are leaving. The hard-hitting investigations on which the *Times*'s reputation rested have all but disappeared. The newspaper's integrity has been challenged by repeated accusations that the Allbritton team will bend over backward to please advertis-

ers. A notorious instance was the firing of a young reporter who had added a couple of relevant details to a press release issued by Trenton's leading department store.

"It's a tragedy what has happened to the paper and to the public," says Larry Kramer, the former executive editor of the *Times*, who rejoined *The Washington Post* after the sale. "The public has lost a watchdog and gained a bulletin board."

Midway between Philadelphia and New York City, Trenton is an old manufacturing town ("Trenton Makes, the World Takes") that has fallen on hard times. The presence of the state government helps keep it alive. With a population of only 92,000, it is one of the smallest of the score of U.S. cities with competing daily newspapers. The *Times* was founded as an afternoon broadsheet in 1882; *The Trentonian*, a morning tabloid, was born of a *Times* circulation department strike in 1945. When the Washington Post Company took over in 1974, the *Times* was leading the upstart tabloid in circulation, 72,750 to 59,938, but the gap had been narrowing.

In what seems to have been an attempt to appeal to a broad spectrum of readers, the Post-run paper carried long, expensive investigative pieces while also publishing large quantities of parochial "chicken-dinner" news. As management geared up to put out both morning and afternoon editions, it allowed the *Times*'s newsroom staff to grow from 85 to about 115 in early 1980. (Attrition subsequently reduced this top count to eighty.) *The Trentonian*, meanwhile, did nothing to improve on its familiar fare of booster news, wire copy, and spicy crime stories — and steadily gained readers. By the time the Washington Post Company had grown tired of losing money, and of trying to figure out what Trenton readers wanted, *The Trentonian* had actually

'It is not . . . the policy of Allbritton Communications Company to allow the interests of our advertisers to influence the news'

Joe L. Allbritton,
chairman,
Allbritton Communications
Company



Anthony DePalma, who lives in Weehawken, reports on New Jersey for The New York Times and other publications.



'I wanted to clarify some vague parts of the release so the average reader would understand that . . . Dunham's wasn't sinking'

John Chester,
former Times cub reporter

CJ/ Harvey Wang

inched ahead in daily circulation.

When the Post decided to withdraw from what Katharine Graham called her "Vietnam," Joe Allbritton was ready to step into the fray. Undiscouraged by his experience in keeping *The Washington Star* afloat, in 1977 — the year before he sold the *Star* to Time Inc. — Allbritton bought several papers, including the Paterson, New Jersey, *News*. The *News* was, in the words of an Allbritton aide, "a dull, failing evening newspaper." The Texan's remedy for failure was to reduce the *News's* staff and combine some of its editorial and production operations with those of his newly acquired Union City *Dispatch*. Both papers are now reportedly making a profit.

When Allbritton took over *The Trenton Times* last fall, he promptly applied the lessons he had learned in Paterson and Union City: if you want to make money, cut the staff. Two days after the October 30 purchase, sixty *Times* staff members, including twenty-four of eighty editorial employees, were fired.

Allbritton brought in a new editor — Tom Curran, who began his career at *The Dispatch* in 1974 and who came to Trenton from the New York *Daily News* — but for the first few months the *Times* did not change dramatically. Managing editor Rem Rieder, assured by the new owners that they were committed to quality, was hopeful. "I won't say that I thought everything would be wonderful," he says now. "At the same time, I had too much invested in the paper to just walk away without trying to

preserve some of the best parts, at least for a while."

The first sign of trouble came when Curran handed down a new set of newsroom rules. Editors were told to minimize the number of stories that jumped from page one. Stories were to be kept short (ten inches was to be the maximum in most cases), and color photographs had to appear on the front page every day. Against considerable newsroom opposition, voiced at several staff meetings, management tried to shift the emphasis from investigative and enterprise reporting to short pieces on specific towns. Rieder and another editor persuaded Curran to abandon this strategy.

If what was happening in the newsroom was understandably troubling to the newsroom staff, some of the business-side decisions probably made sense. Even the Post management concedes that the paper was overstaffed and that it was planning cuts, though not as deep as those Allbritton made. In the meantime, the new owners prepared the paper to switch from afternoon to morning publication, an action the Washington Post Company had planned to take this spring.

The *Times* became a morning paper the week before Christmas. Leading up to the transformation, the paper ran full-page advertisements selling the new paper to its afternoon readers. Several of the ads pictured the new editor at the head of an editorial conference or talking to a cop on a Trenton street.

"Someday soon, you'll run into Tom Curran," the ads promised. "And when you do, it will be in the darnedest place — when you least expect it."

Cub reporter John Chester ran into Tom Curran on his first day as a full-time business reporter for *The Trenton Times*. It was January 25, the day after Superbowl XVI. Chester had forfeited his coveted tickets to the game because he wanted to be on time for his first day on the job. Early that afternoon he took a call from a business reporter at the *Buffalo Evening News* who had heard that United Department Stores Inc., a firm that controlled more than 100 stores in the Northeast and that is owned by three Trenton brothers, had filed for Chapter XI bankruptcy. The staff cuts were painfully evident that morning. The regular metro editor was on vacation and a reporter was filling in at the city desk. The only person in the newsroom with time to handle the United story was Chester, a twenty-three-year-old economics major who, just that morning, had become the entire *Trenton Times* business staff.

Rem Rieder admits that somebody other than the \$220-a-week cub should have been assigned what was obviously a page-one story. United is the parent company of S. P. Dunham & Co., the last remaining department store in downtown Trenton — and, in effect, the sole evidence of Trenton's having a downtown in the traditional sense.

By four o'clock that afternoon, Chester had talked to United's attorneys about the Chapter XI filing and had tried

unsuccessfully to reach the owners. At six, editor Curran told Chester the story would run on the business page. Then, handing him a three-paragraph press release from Dunham & Co., Curran told him to "punch it in" the VDT.

"At that point, my past experience took over," says Chester, who had worked as a part-time stringer for the *Times's* sports staff for more than a year. "I wanted to clarify some vague parts of the release so the average reader would understand that Chapter XI didn't mean Dunham's was sinking."

Chester rewrote the press release by adding a brief definition of Chapter XI bankruptcy, a statement from United's attorneys, a list of the five Dunham's department stores in the Trenton area, and a one-sentence conclusion explaining that United is privately owned by three Trenton brothers. Chester punched in the story at about seven o'clock and went home.

The article, headlined UNITED DEPARTMENT STORES FILES FOR REORGANIZATION, appeared on the bottom of the *Times's* business page on January 26. Chester entered the newsroom that

morning pleased at having a story in print. His euphoria was short-lived.

James Bennett, vice president and general manager of the *Times*, summoned Chester to his office and upbraided him for having mishandled the story. At 3 P.M., Curran called Chester on the carpet and told him that he had given his word to someone, and that person in turn had given his word to someone at Dunham's, that the press release would run verbatim. "Curran told me his word wasn't worth anything anymore," Chester recalls, "and that he couldn't keep me." (Curran declined to be interviewed for this article.)

Word of Chester's firing spread quickly, and an angry staff grilled Bennett about the incident when he entered the newsroom later that afternoon. His version of the dismissal, which was received skeptically by the staff, was that Chester had disobeyed a direct order from his editor — namely, to run the release verbatim. During a telephone conversation the same day with *Times* night metro editor Ramona Smith, Bennett admitted that he and Curran had agreed to run the release verbatim, adding,

Smith recalls, that "we probably are going to lose that account." (Bennett declined to be interviewed for this article; the *Times* has not lost the Dunham's account.)

Across town, *The Trentonian* had printed the release verbatim without, apparently, giving the matter a second thought. Emil Slaboda, the paper's editor, says press releases "do get through quite often," adding, "We're certainly not going to go out of our way to antagonize a major advertiser."

While complying with Dunham's wishes may have been business as usual at *The Trentonian*, it was a complete reversal for *The Trenton Times*. Less than two years before, on March 28, 1980, the *Times* had run a page-one story revealing that Dunham's owners owed \$186,000 in back taxes. Angered by the article, one of the owners stormed into then-publisher Edward Padilla's office to complain. While *The Trentonian*, which had run the same story, obligingly carried a correction the next day, Padilla stood by reporter Carolyn Acker and her story.

At the same January 26 staff meeting at which general manager Bennett explained why Chester had been fired, he announced that final authority over the news operation would now rest, not with editor Curran, but with a newcomer: Linda Grist Cunningham, who for the previous eight months had served as executive editor of Allbritton's *News and Dispatch* in northern New Jersey. (From the moment he took over in Trenton, Curran had been caught in the middle. Former investigative reporter John Mintz remembers Curran "running back and forth like a terrier" between the corporate offices and the newsroom.) Curran was graciously allowed to retain his title; Cunningham was named executive editor.

A week later, on February 3, managing editor Rieder — the embodiment of the Post Company era — was asked to leave. A corporate spokesman explained the firing by saying that Rieder "had just not been in sync with the editorial direction the newspaper was moving toward." Rieder, now associate news editor for *The Miami Herald*, says that if he had not been fired he would have left within a week.

Rieder's firing was followed by a



CJR/Harvey Wang

'Managing editor Rem Rieder — the embodiment of the Post Company era — was fired for not being "in sync with the editorial direction the newspaper was moving toward"'

Rem Rieder,
now associate news editor,
The Miami Herald

round of resignations. Night managing editor Jack Steele, who during eighteen years in Trenton had become such an institution that a bar chair was reserved in his name at Lorenzo's, the local political watering hole, left for the *Philadelphia Daily News*, as did four others. State House correspondent Matthew Purdy went to *The Philadelphia Inquirer*; metro editor Rick Levinson, to *The San Diego Union*; political writer Henry Bryan, to *The Dallas Times Herald*. In all, sixteen reporters and editors have left since the first round of firings in early November. Another two on leave — former business editor Jaye Scholl, who is a Bagehot fellow at Columbia; and investigative reporter Diana Henriques, a visiting fellow at Princeton — have decided not to return.

On February 11, W. Dean Singleton, president of the *Times*, appearing on a statewide public television program, defended Chester's firing and the use of the Dunham press release. Singleton told TV host John McLaughlin that the release presented all the basic facts and that "we didn't see any reason to alarm local people about Dunham's when Dunham's isn't in trouble." He rejected suggestions that the release was vague or misleading, even though it contained only one cryptic indication of the story's connection to Trenton.

Singleton's valiant defense was a wasted effort. On March 7, *The Trenton Times* ran a lead editorial conceding that management's decision to run the release, verbatim, as a news item was wrong. Titled A MATTER OF INTEGRITY, and signed by Joe L. Allbritton, the editorial must have mystified many Trenton readers. Although Allbritton trumpeted the importance of sustaining "the confidence of our readers in the news columns" and stated that "It is not now nor has it ever been the policy of Allbritton Communications Company to allow the interests of our advertisers to influence the news . . .," he failed to mention either the name of the advertiser involved in the month-old flap or the press release in question.

"We never ran anything about the Dunham's incident or the firing of John Chester," says former metro editor Rick Levinson, who left the paper after the editorial appeared. "None of our readers knew what the hell it meant unless

they had read the stories [about the firing] in *The Wall Street Journal* or *The New York Times*."

Allbritton is not alone in confessing that mistakes have been made at *The Trenton Times*; executive editor Cunningham maintains that although she is not responsible for anything that happened at the paper before she arrived, she will make sure that none of it occurs again. She says that she has thrown out many of the arbitrary rules on story length and jump policy imposed by Curran. (Several reporters believe that it's still best to abide by the old rules.)

The Allbritton team pledged that the quality of the *Times* would not be compromised, but a comparison of an edition prepared under Post Company management with a recent Allbritton edition suggests otherwise. The front page on Thursday, October 1, 1981, back in the Post era, carried three international wire items mixed with five local stories and one feature from the Washington Post service. Inside, there was a lively op-ed page, a business section with two long, by-lined pieces, and a Region section front page with six by-lined stories, five of them continued on a second page. Inside the

**'It is not our intention
to make this paper
a little New York Times or
Washington Post.
It is our intention to
beat The Trentonian'**

Allbritton spokesman George Beveridge

Living section was a full page of short "bulletin board" news called "Making the Rounds."

The front page on Thursday, March 11, 1982, four months into the Allbritton era, featured an above-the-fold, full-color photograph showing scale models of two churches made from 32,719 matchsticks. National and international news was absent from the page, except for a wire-service piece on the resignation of New Jersey Senator Harrison Williams. Two local front-page stories were crime-related. Gone from the inside was the op-ed page. The busi-

ness section was reduced to one ten-inch by-lined story, press releases, and a few wire reports, including one dealing with "Allbritton's entry as a possible buyer" of the New York *Daily News*. The front page of the Region section carried six stories, but none jumped inside. "Making the Rounds" was unchanged.

"Local coverage ought to be the role of this paper in this market," declares Allbritton spokesman George Beveridge. He speaks with some authority on the subject, having won a Pulitzer Prize in 1958 for a *Washington Star* series on the future of the metropolitan Washington area. "It is not our intention to make this paper a little *New York Times* or *Washington Post*," Beveridge adds. "It is our intention to beat *The Trentonian*."

Former *Times* reporters concede that the quantity of local coverage has increased, even if the quality has not improved. However, as for the critical story of what the United Stores reorganization under Chapter XI really means for Dunham's, for its owners, and for Trenton, it has been all but ignored. At least two *Times* reporters have asked to tackle the story, and Cunningham agrees that someone should have been assigned to check Dunham's financial condition.

"If it will make you feel better, I will go out [into the newsroom] and say, 'Do a story,' and see that it is followed up," Cunningham replied when asked why her paper's coverage of the story, as of mid-March, had been limited to the initial press release and a brief AP story.

Meanwhile, Allbritton's survival journalism seems to be paying off in slight circulation gains. In February, the *Times* claimed a daily circulation of 68,240 — up 2,000 from last September's figures. *The Trentonian* estimates it has picked up about 1,000, bringing its total close to 69,000.

Emil Slaboda, who runs *The Trentonian*, views the battle calmly. "When the Post took over, they told us they would close us in a year. We proved them wrong, and now we've got another one in here." The difference is, of course, that the Post paper offered readers a genuine alternative, while the Allbritton broadsheet reads more and more like an expanded version of its tabloid competitor. ■

What do Xerox and Coke have in common?

A great name.

But that's only part of the answer.

In both cases, those great names are also great trademarks.

And great trademarks are as valuable to you as they are to the companies that own them.

That's because they ensure that when you ask for something, you get what you ask for.

The Xerox trademark identifies a range of products.

So it should always be followed by the name of the one to which it refers—"Xerox copier," "Xerox information processor" or "Xerox electronic printer."

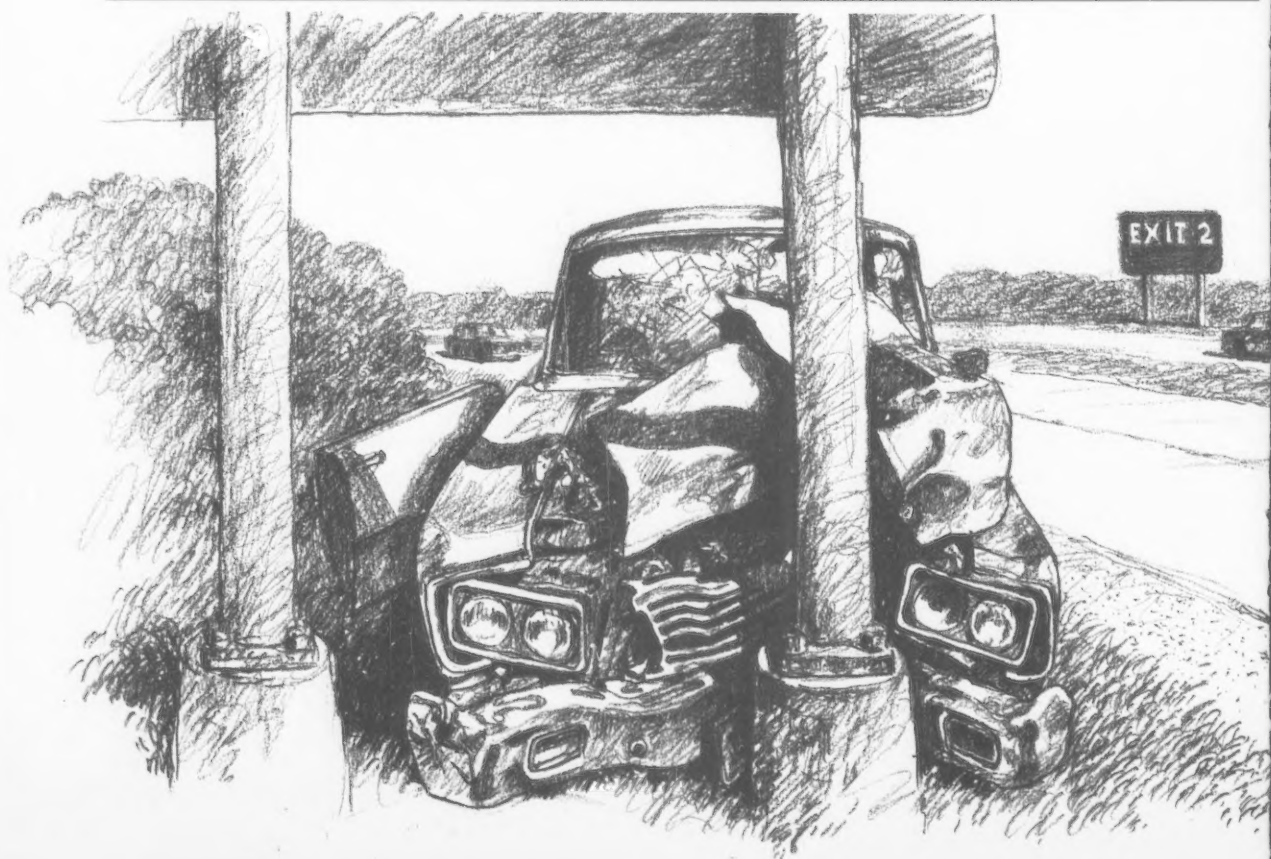
Whether you want a certain soft drink or a certain copier, you want to be sure that what you get is the real thing.

XEROX

We're doing what has to be done.

Highway Death Traps.

Fixed, rigid signposts can kill or injure.
That's why Property-Casualty insurance companies are trying
to remove them from our highways.



Five college students were driving home on semester break. Their car went out of control and crashed into a signpost on an Illinois highway. The car was torn in two by the rigid steel. Two students were killed outright, three were injured.

Astonishingly, *the sign was left in place* after the accident. Three years later, another crash... into the same signpost. This time, two people were critically injured.

Finally, after the second crash, a new sign on breakaway posts and set back from the edge of the pavement was substituted.

Auto crashes constitute a crisis in public health. They injure more than *five million* and kill over 50,000 Americans each year. This toll can be lowered by improving safety features in automobiles and by convincing Americans to drive more carefully. But the environment in which people drive also must be improved... we must make our roads and highways safer.

America's roadsides, including those along the most modern high-speed expressways, are lined with boobytraps: concrete bridge abutments, stub-ended guardrails, large trees, rigid signposts, utility and telephone poles, and others that turn minor mishaps into major crashes that needlessly kill and injure vehicle occupants.

Problems Identified

Technical solutions to the roadside hazard problem have existed for years, but they have not been sufficiently utilized. That's why property-casualty insurance companies fund and support the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. IIHS is an independent,

scientific organization that identifies what is hurting and killing people in crashes and suggests what can be done to reduce the toll.

The IIHS has taken an active part in identifying roadside hazards. For example, it helped highway officials determine road conditions that need engineering changes. Researchers studied road characteristics, such as curvature and grade at fatality sites, as well as the locations of roadside hazards. Then they compared these findings with conditions on roads where fatalities had not occurred.

Result? Partly because of IIHS programs, federal funds were allocated for the dismantling of existing roadside hazards and their replacement with safer structures.


Legal Options Examined

Another IIHS contribution: Institute staff and law firm personnel analyzed the legal liability of public and private organizations, and the personal liability of state and local officials, contractors, designers, and others responsible for roadside hazards. This definitive work examines strategies for employing federal and state law to prevent or remove roadside hazards, and it describes the legal options available for forcing their removal and preventing their future construction or reconstruction.

Many people are unaware of highway boobytraps. Property-casualty insurance companies believe that the more publicity and discussion there is of this problem, the closer we will be to implementing solutions.

And we want to see this problem solved. Our primary concern is to save lives and reduce injuries wherever possible. But, safer highways also *can* help to reduce losses and to slow the rise in the cost of insurance.

And that's an objective we all share.



We're working to keep insurance affordable.

This message presented by the **American Insurance Association**, 85 John Street, NY, NY 10038

Where the Media Elite Stand

In the nation's shift from an industrial to an information society, a new elite has risen in the land. Its members work in the news media. They're the media's heavyweights, courted by politicians, studied by scholars, pampered by peers. Some of their bylines and TV images are familiar to millions.

They make up a new leadership group that "competes for influence alongside more traditional elites representing business, labor, government, and other sectors of society," asserts a major study performed under the auspices of Columbia University's Research Institute on International Change.

The research was directed by S. Robert Lichter of George Washington University and Stanley Rothman of Smith College. They have reported on their project in *Public Opinion* magazine, which says the findings raise "questions about journalism's qualifications as an 'objective' profession."

The study involved interviews with 240 journalists and broadcasters working for the most influential media outlets. These include the New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Time, Newsweek, U.S. News & World Report, CBS, NBC, ABC.

Where stand the media elite ideologically?

Some 54% of leading journalists count themselves as liberals. Only 19% describe themselves as right of center. Even greater differences show up when they rate their cohorts. Fifty-six percent say the people they work with are mostly on the left and only 8% on the right. Overwhelmingly, the media elite vote for Democratic candidates in presidential elections.

The big guns of the media come down on the liberal side of a wide range of social and political issues. They show special fondness

for welfare capitalism. Some 68% believe the government should substantially reduce the income gap between rich and poor. Close to half feel the government should guarantee a job to anyone wanting one. Yet few are outright socialists. In fact, they stoutly spurn the notion that major corporations should be publicly owned. And they support a fundamental capitalist tenet that people with greater ability should earn more than those with less ability.

Despite acceptance of the economic order, many top journalists express general discontent with the social order. A substantial minority — 28% — favor overhauling the entire system through "a complete restructuring of its basic institutions." The same proportion take the view that *all* political systems are repressive because they concentrate power and authority in a few hands.

On international issues, a majority of the media elite believe U.S. economic exploitation has contributed to poverty in the Third World and that America's heavy use of natural resources is "immoral." By a three-to-one margin, they reject the view that Third World nations would be even worse off without the assistance they've received from the West.

In an information society, the upper-crust media practitioners are a telling force. "Cosmopolitan in their origins, liberal in their outlooks, they are aware and protective of their collective influence," Lichter and Rothman write. The group profiled by the study is "out of step with the public," *Public Opinion* opines.

At least now there's scholarly confirmation of the ideological and political tilt of many of the folks who declaim daily, in print and on the tube, on the shape of the world.

AT ISSUE

Who needs an hour of network news?

by BLAIR CLARK

Will there be, should there be, a nightly hour of network news on television? All three nets have said they want to double their evening news "shows," two decades after the last doubling. The 200-odd affiliates of each of them are considering the various proposals with varying degrees of enthusiasm or of reluctance shading into hostility. At the moment it's a standoff. Few will predict when, or even if, it will ever happen.

Of course, the hour news *could* start tomorrow. There is nothing to stop any network from programming news into any hour of prime time (8-11 P.M., EST), the time it has the right to control. Nothing, that is, except money. But the money is in the hundreds of millions of dollars. It flows to the producers of entertainment programs. It cascades onto the balance sheets of the networks and their conglomerate owners. There's a substantial runoff on the ledgers of the affiliates, including locally sold "ad-jacencies" to the networks' ad spots. And the size of this lucrative flood depends on the "numbers," alias ratings, namely the size of the audience exposed to the advertising that pays for "free" broadcasting.

If there exists a broadcaster who believes that a news program in prime time would not cause a steep decline in size of audience, I have failed to find such a person. Most of them shudder at the prospect of a downward curve from an average nighttime network audience of around 80 million to perhaps a mere 30 or 40 million. And if that plunge occurred at, say, 9 P.M. (when the BBC chooses to inform the British public), what would happen to the "lead-in" to

subsequent programs? Would viewers ever come back, or would they break the habit and faithlessly read, talk, play games, or go to bed? Stuff of nightmares for the bottomliners.

Bottom lines in broadcasting are notoriously slippery, which is to say that

On April 6, as this article was going to press, CBS announced that it was indefinitely deferring plans to expand its evening news program to one hour. ABC and NBC have also shelved their proposals.

while their composition is known in intimate detail to the managers of stations and networks, it is hard for the public to get its hands on a breakdown of these interesting figures. This is because, at

least in the major markets, the profits are so enormous that the owners blush to reveal them, perhaps out of a sense of modesty or prudence, and so the profits tend to get buried in accounting mumbo-jumbo. But it is generally believed in the trade that the network-owned outlets in the major markets earn enormous profits every year. A glimpse at the dimensions of TV profitability was provided in a March 4 *Wall Street Journal* story about KTVU, a Cox Broadcasting Co. independent (non-network) station in Oakland, California. Last year, the station, which specializes in network re-reruns and old movies, cleaned up around \$18 million on an estimated sales volume of \$35 million, according to a financial analyst.



"We now return you to your local studios — and good riddance."

Blair Clark spent twelve years at CBS as a correspondent and was vice president of CBS News from 1961 through 1964, during which period CBS became the first network to offer half-hour network news.

Drawing by Geo. Price, copyright 1982 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

Naturally, the TV news people tend to be all for the expanded evening news. Some are skeptical or cynical about the exaggerated claims made for its civic virtue, but they live on the fringes of a world of hype and are accustomed to its ways. One senior network news executive cited the answer always given by police officials when asked what is needed to deal with crime — “more,” of both cops and money. More time is the TV news answer.

In the ranks of former network news executives, fervor for the hour runs high. Richard S. Salant, now serving out a contract at NBC, says he began pushing the hour news at CBS as early as 1963, when the network became the first to have the half-hour, in which effort he was instrumental. Fred W. Friendly, who was CBS News president in an interregnum between Salant's two terms, and who quit in a fight over policy and authority, is passionate in his call for the hour news. He calls the present half-hour “a rip-off.” His views on the need to double the time were given at length in the Chet Huntley Memorial Lecture at New York University on March 10.

“Few issues on the American agenda are more crucial,” said Friendly, “than the prospect of expanding the nightly news in order to achieve new dimensions of comprehension through innovative forms of presentation that only a liberated time frame will make possible.” After deploring the fact that “every night there are stories that don't get on the air — because there just isn't time,” and after comparing the process of deciding what news *does* get chosen to “a daily auction,” Friendly declared that “often the truly important is sacrificed to the sensational or urgent.” I find it hard to think of a better definition of “news” than “urgent” information.

His real worry, however, seems to be expressed in this sentence: “The tragedy is that many viewers believe they are getting all the news, so they don't bother reading a newspaper.” What will happen to newspaper circulation, one can't help wondering, when viewers really are “getting all the news” from the hour news which Friendly believes can and should “meet the challenges and threats

to our society”? And so, he said, “The hour news demands a leap of faith . . . a dramatic step forward in television reporting, a coming of age of broadcast journalism.”

Friendly's evangelistic fervor for the hour news, and his apocalyptic vision of the evils it might avert, are at one extreme of the discussion of the hour news. He spoke in that Huntley lecture of the “gutting of America,” of “a decaying orbit for the American dream,” and went on to warn gloomily that “this nation is edging close to a state of national emergency.”

Among the actual broadcasters the tone is less passionate and there are differing views on the need for doubling

**‘Perhaps the cure
for network melancholy
is more news.
At least
it might help’**

the nightly news broadcasts. The venerable Walter Cronkite had a standard line in his speeches for many years. The half-hour news, he claimed, was “basically . . . a headline service.” With an hour, TV news “could do a quantum better job.” “We try so hard to force ten kilos of material into our one-kilo sack,” said Cronkite, “that we distort what we do communicate.” On the other hand, as a “balanced” broadcast might say, David Brinkley takes a different view. “The truth is,” Brinkley told an interviewer from *Washington Journalism Review* last fall, “that there isn't that much news of general, national-public interest.” He disposed of the much-used comparison between the number of words uttered in a half-hour news broadcast and the space those words take in a newspaper (roughly two-thirds of a standard newspaper page) by pointing out that much of what takes up space in daily print (sports, local news, market tables, service columns, horoscopes, births, deaths, marriages, etc.) would never make it to the tube in a network broadcast no matter

what its length. And, he added, “if a story is covered adequately, by television standards, in two minutes, I'm not sure it would be improved by running it four minutes.”

To this line of argument the hour's enthusiasts retort that they would not simply double the length of the stories in the current format. One-hour news would differ in form, approach, and content. There would be long stories and short ones, headlines and “in-depth” treatments, much more “background” and “analysis” (a term broadcasters prefer to “commentary,” with the latter's dread suggestion of opinion).

All sorts of formats are kicking around the networks. At a meeting in Hawaii last fall, CBS offered its affiliates a plan whereby the stations could take either the full hour or only half of it. That was regarded as part of the sales pitch for the hour, showing network flexibility and sympathy for the affiliates' problems, and it has not been stressed since. ABC has been fiddling with a format allowing local cutaways, for which its experience with the split-second technical demands of the triple anchor on its evening news has provided good training.

There can be no doubt about the ability of the three commercial networks to fill that extra half hour at least competently. They would not even need much time to practice. The reporters, technicians, and equipment are all in place. The effort would be just incremental: news would expand to fill the time made available for it, in a variation on Parkinson's Law. Meanwhile, as the three networks tremble on the edge of the nightly hour, one notes a surge toward visual razzle-dazzle and graphic-mania. They seem to be reaching out of the tube and grabbing the viewer by the lapel.

Way back in 1963, when network nightly news time was last doubled, corporate executives often worried about how they would ever find enough to show and tell, or so they said. That was before broadcast news joined the charmed circle called “profit centers.” Then it was a burdensome obligation that earned the

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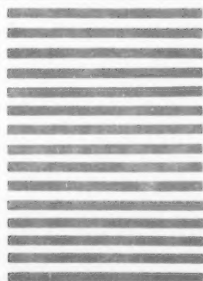
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networks their franchise through service in the public interest, convenience, and necessity, as the statute setting criteria for broadcast licensing put it.

In 1965, the year after I left the management of CBS News, its budget was about \$35 million and it cost the company money. Now, each of the network news divisions spends close to \$200 million, and the word is that two of the three nonfiction operations are in the black, with only NBC tinged with red.

"American television exists primarily to make money out of advertising," as *The Economist* unremarkably remarked in a January article on TV news. But the three networks' push for the hour news does not originate in that primacy. In the short run, there are more profitable ways for them to program.

What drives the broadcasters is the urgent need to distinguish the networks from other purveyors of pictures and sound, to offer a "product" which, even in an age of proliferating communications technology, no cable outfit or syndicator can match. What better device than actuality, live or recently canned? In other words, the thing called "news." In the long run, they see it as their salvation.

This is not the first time that the quality of immediacy has been linked to network survival. I remember my astonishment when Ed Murrow told me in the mid-1950s why he had been forbidden to record for later broadcast his stirring accounts of the Nazi blitz of London. He wanted to record his report while the bombs were falling and London was in flames, not make it later when the bombers had gone, but CBS had to be "live," Murrow was told. The considerations were not journalistic or even dramatic: if news could be recorded, what was to stop the network's entertainers from putting their shows on records? What if Bing Crosby — to cite the example inflicted on Murrow — were to take it into his head to peddle his show directly to the affiliates? How then could a network based on selling and distributing live entertainment survive?

The network nightmare is different now. Almost everything is in the can (or on the reel) except what the news divisions provide. The networks make their

own movies or buy them from suppliers. They try to hook the audience with stars and long-running serials. But hungry outsiders can compete in that area, syndicating the product to the stations, which can run and sell them without paying tribute to the linking network.

All that is really distinctive in networking these days is live. That is, news and, of course, sports. Without that quality of immediacy, the three networks are just down in the muck with the rest of the time salesmen and show merchants.

As further evidence of troubles ahead for commercial networking, I will cite a few lines from a singularly downbeat interview with Grant Tinker, who took over as head of NBC last summer. "One of the discouraging things in trying to resuscitate NBC," the depressed Tinker told Tony Schwartz of *The New York Times* last February, "is that I came along at a time when the upscale viewer is being fragmented off by the competition from cable. The quality of television may not be good now, but I fear it will deteriorate further."

Perhaps the cure for such network melancholy is more news. At least it might help. The problem lies in the resistance of the affiliates. They see the hour news not as the salvation of the networks and a great contribution to civic virtue but as a grab at some of their profits by the spiders at the centers of the webs in New York. All three of the nets have floated plans which, they say, will cost the average station nothing, through various schemes for ad-revenue sharing. But many affiliates have learned not to trust these promises from headquarters. Their share of revenues tends to erode if the program in a given time period is a ratings success. Then the networks find ways to skim the cream.

In this battle over money and corporate survival, there is presently a curious stalemate. Few of the affiliates come right out and say that no more non-local news is needed, though some question whether it has to be in one hour-long block that happens to fall into a time period when the growing evening audience rakes in money for them. CBS

affiliates have recently been reported as four to one against that network's proposal. NBC's is still before its reluctant affiliates. ABC's is somewhere up in the air, being tinkered with.

If only the fervor of the anti-regulation movement in Washington would sweep away the Federal Communications Commission's Prime Time Access Rule, the networks could charge ahead and offer their hour of news in the period before prime time (although the affiliates would still have the right not to carry it). The PTAR limits the networks' hours in maximum audience time to three of the four hours between 7 and 11 P.M., and the custom is for that time to be in a solid block between 8 and 11. At whatever time the expansion half-hour were inserted in the period preceding prime time, the networks would be cutting into some of the most lucrative station time. (Never mind that this time slot is often filled with giggly game shows and reruns; the cash register is ringing steadily as the audience builds.)

There are powerful constituencies for keeping PTAR in place. They include not only the affiliates and their many friends in Congress whose careers can be greatly benefited, or harmed, by the amount and kind of exposure they get on the stations in their districts. There are also the producers of the material the affiliates buy to program and sell in their own time at rates more profitable than their split with the networks.

And so the networks have a problem. The affiliates have one, too. It is hard to contest the claim that the republic needs an informed citizenry. The debate is over how that should be achieved, by whom, when, and at whose expense (or profit). It is not really an argument about journalism but about the uses of news.

The networks are mobilizing the idealism of their journalists in order to help win a struggle for survival. It is not the first time that professional and financial interests have been in the same harness, and it is not necessarily corrupting. But, too often, claims for the absolute necessity of an added half hour of nightly news seem extravagant.

Surely the fate of the nation does not depend on it—only the fate of an industry called network broadcasting. ■

BOOKS

The powers that weren't

The Real Campaign: The Media and the Battle for the White House

by Jeff Greenfield

Summit Books. 288 pp. \$14.50

by ROBERT G. KAISER

There ought to be a law that every myth and shibboleth of American life must eventually be subjected to a rigorous examination by an analyst as smart and skeptical as Jeff Greenfield. If there were such a law, America's cant quotient would tumble.

In this book Greenfield slays one of the dragons of modern American politics: the idea that the news media, particularly television, hold secret powers to determine the outcome of elections. "The thesis of this book," Greenfield writes with admirable clarity right at the beginning, "is that television and the media made almost no difference in the outcome of the 1980 Presidential campaign." Implicitly, he absolves the media of any blame for who the candidates were in 1980, which is an oversight, in my opinion; but within the limits he has set for himself, his arguments are irrefutable.

Greenfield's tough-minded analysis buries the ghosts first set loose, probably, by Joe McGinnis's *The Selling of The President*, a best-seller that depicted the mendacious salesmanship of the 1968 Nixon campaign. As Greenfield correctly notes, McGinnis and his readers both probably "drew the wrong lessons" from 1968. The real story that year was not the triumph of a sleazy advertising campaign, but that Nixon managed to blow a fifteen-point

lead in the polls and squander a two-to-one advantage in money available for TV commercials as he almost lost to Hubert Humphrey. Nixon would have lost had George Wallace not been a candidate in 1968.

At the heart of Greenfield's argument is his observation that the media cannot compete with the truth or with deep popular convictions. The crucial fact of 1980 was that Americans considered Jimmy Carter a poor president. Carter's advisers understood this as well as anyone; they designed his entire campaign around the proposition that Carter was better than the alternative — first Senator Edward M. Kennedy, then Ronald Reagan. Democratic voters accepted the first proposition, in part, as Greenfield notes, because of a basic truth that the media missed in the early stages of the campaign: despite glib assertions by the media that Kennedy was free of the taint of "Chappaquiddick," he wasn't. Americans remembered. And, when it came to the general election campaign, they also remembered how little they liked Jimmy Carter. Carter had one hope, Greenfield argues — to portray Reagan as a dangerous fringe character, the 1980 version of Barry Goldwater or George McGovern. When this gambit failed, Carter's chances were nil. (Later in the book, Greenfield suggests that if the media had behaved differently, the outcome of the election might have been different, a proposition that does not follow the rest of Greenfield's argument and is, in my opinion, a mistake.)

There were two candidates in 1980 who tried to prove that media exposure could have a dramatic impact on the course of an election campaign. One was John B. Connally, the former Texas governor (and former Democrat) who spent \$12 million, most of it on television advertising, in pursuit of the Re-

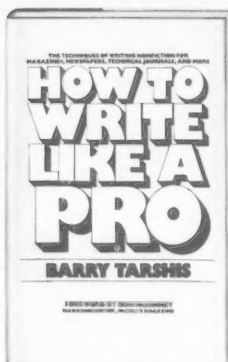
publican nomination. Connally is a man of awesome personal presence who looks like a president, who could generate intense enthusiasm in corporate America for his candidacy, and whose \$12 million bought him precisely one delegate in the 1980 caucuses and primaries. The second interesting attempt to use media power to achieve political ends came from John Anderson. Anderson succeeded where no previous third-party candidate had in attracting media attention. The three networks and major papers covered him intensively all fall. He won a place in a nationally televised debate with Reagan. At one point the polls suggested that 25 percent or more of the voters were inclined to back Anderson; on election day he got 6 percent of the vote.

Greenfield contends that the news media have become mired in their efforts to expose the inner workings and secret motives of political campaigns. He describes this as an understandable but wrongheaded response to past elections, when the media may have been taken in by candidates' manipulation, or at least felt guilty about downplaying its extent (as in 1968). In fact, he argues persuasively, the actual content of a campaign — not its attempted manipulation or the whims of the media — is what matters most.

Of course, "actual content" does not always mean high-minded policy statements. Greenfield suggests that perhaps the most important moment in the televised debate between Carter and Reagan was the president's reference to a discussion with his daughter Amy about nuclear weapons. (Carter actually rehearsed that passage before the debate, and was determined to use it despite warnings from some advisers that it was a bad idea.) As Greenfield observes, invoking a young daughter to

Robert G. Kaiser, a reporter for *The Washington Post*, wrote about the news media and politics during the 1980 campaign.

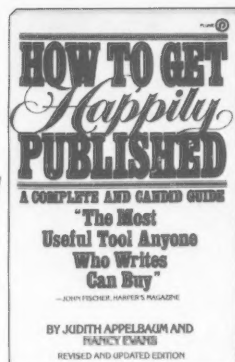
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BOOKS

talk about nuclear arms made Carter look ridiculous. It was Carter's "bombshell" for the debate, Greenfield writes, which he dropped "on himself." The point is a good one. Many Americans vote their instincts on the presidential candidates, and for those whose instincts told them Carter was an un-presidential figure, the Amy gaffe was eloquent evidence that they were right.

As a television commentator himself (for CBS), Greenfield might have written a defensive book, but he hasn't. Many outsiders will react instinctively against his effort to downplay the immediate power of the media in a campaign, but this is one insider who is convinced he is right. Did the media influence the party's selections of Reagan and Carter? Polls taken at the very start of 1980 showed that Republicans favored Reagan and Democrats wanted Carter to be the nominee. Did the media elect Reagan by downplaying his weaknesses? I watched all three networks' evening news programs throughout the campaign of 1980, and I am prepared to testify in court that Reagan's weaknesses (now obvious in his presidency) were thoroughly discussed on the network news programs—more thoroughly than Jimmy Carter's were during the 1976 campaign.

Greenfield deserves praise for his candor about the limitations of reporters and commentators during a long election year. He and his researcher, Sarah Turner, have found wonderful examples of media foolishness, a lot of it devoted to pumping up George Bush and dismissing Ronald Reagan after the Iowa caucuses of January. "I would like to suggest," said NBC's Tom Pettit on the morning after the Iowa voting, "that Ronald Reagan is politically dead."

Though he does a gentle and, to my mind, incomplete job of it, Greenfield even gives Walter Cronkite a verbal spanking for his performance during the one exciting night of the Republican National Convention when Reagan and former President Ford were toying with the idea of a Reagan-Ford dream ticket. Cronkite has never been a gifted reporter or interviewer, and that night he fairly

flaunted his limitations. First, in a transgression that Greenfield does not note, Cronkite allowed Ford to get out of the interview, in which Ford had dropped tantalizing hints that he might run for vice president with Reagan, without pinning him down. Cronkite seemed to be swept up in the teasing mood that animated Ford, and he just teased along with the former president. Of course, Ford's vague hints were enough to create a furor on the convention floor — and a long night of exciting and ultimately laughable drama concocted by the networks.

"CBS News has learned," Uncle Walter announced at 10:10 P.M. that night (and Greenfield prints the text), "that there is a definite plan for Ronald Reagan and the former president of the United States, Gerald Ford, who will be his selection as running mate, an unparalleled, unprecedented situation in American politics . . . to come to this convention hall tonight to appear together on the platform for Ronald Reagan to announce that Gerald Ford would run with him."

Altogether this is a fine book, one that genuinely illuminates the interaction between the modern mass media and the political process. Students of journalism — both the academic and armchair varieties — should profit enormously from it.

I have one quarrel with Greenfield, though, to be fair, it goes somewhat outside the scope of this volume. By absolving the media of blame for how the presidential campaign turned out, I fear that Greenfield is too soft on the candidates, on the voting public, and on us in the media. For although it is true that television's power to determine who wins elections is easily exaggerated, television's power to *change the nature* of our elections has been, and remains, decisive.

I would argue that we got Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan as our candidates for president in 1980 because of fundamental changes in the way we practice politics — changes that would never have occurred in the absence of television. As many analysts have noted, old-fashioned political parties have not been able to survive the mass-media

age, so we have to get along without them. At least as important, the evolution of television as the primary means of political communication in our society has stimulated a new kind of political rhetoric that can catapult a Carter or a Reagan to the forefront of our national drama, but that can leave the country without practiced leadership. Imagine yourself explaining to Thomas Jefferson or even to Will Rogers how it came to pass that in 1980, a time of genuine national difficulty, the United States had to choose between a pathetic, failed sitting president and a retired movie actor who had no personal experience dealing with the great national issues of the day. The fact is that American political rhetoric, especially the stuff that a presidential campaign brings forth, has virtually nothing to do with the fundamental problems of governing this country. Carter came to office with a dream program that failed; now Reagan appears to be repeating essentially the same process. This is serious for the country, but we don't like to talk about it.

At the end of his book Greenfield concludes that "what appears to have decided the election was a series of fundamental changes in the beliefs of millions of Americans." He intends this as a way of absolving the media, but I think it is far off the mark. What happened in 1932 and 1952 and 1968 and 1976: America fired the coach. (In '52 and '68 the coach got the message before even deciding to run for reelection.) All the polling data on voter attitudes in 1980 and since show that it was anti-Carter feeling, not pro-Reagan sentiment, that carried the day in our last general election. We now have a disjointed national politics, a politics of one-liners and two-minute items on the evening news, in which serious issues about how to manage the country and its place in the world are, at best, peripheral. We have a symbolic politics, one which records the instincts and prejudices and (for some, but not too many) the fundamental beliefs of those Americans — roughly half — who bother to take part. Our problems are worse, I think, than Greenfield lets on.

Occupational hazard

In the Heat of the Summer

by John Katzenbach

Atheneum. 311 pp. \$13.95

by RALPH WHITEHEAD, JR.

John Katzenbach, a *Miami Herald* reporter, has written a case study of a classic newsroom malady, the Lonelyhearts syndrome. As it happens, he has put it in the compelling form of a novel of suspense and detection. Eventually the pace of his plot outruns his critical treatment of the case, but only after his story has effectively suggested some of the moral limits to the reporter's role.

The Lonelyhearts syndrome gets its name from *Miss Lonelyhearts*, Nathaniel West's short novel about an advice-to-the-lovelorn columnist who finds himself drawn into the sideshow afflictions of the grotesques whose letters fill his desk. He can protect himself by letting calluses form on his spirit, or he can let their pain become his obsession. Thus, he's fated to become either a cynic or a madman. West takes this dilemma as the premise for dark comedy, of course, but it is a genuine hazard for those who must work with people in extremity, a hazard for reporters and nurses, for police officers and soldiers. And these are precisely the occupational types assembled in Katzenbach's cast of characters.

Katzenbach's reporter is the narrator, twenty-seven-year-old Malcolm Anderson of the *Miami Journal*. His values and reporting techniques are a blend of the new media sensibility and the old newspaper hype. On the one hand, the reflexes in his rhetoric show us his suspicion of the police, his disdain for the Vietnam War, and his pride in belonging to the Church of the First Amendment. Because of these attitudes, and because the story occurs in the summer after Richard Nixon's resignation, we are inclined at first to place him as a committed member of the Watergate generation of reporters. On the other hand, he can be falsely sympathetic as

Ralph Whitehead, Jr., a former reporter, is professor of journalism at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

he prods the father of a murder victim in order to elicit a quotable expression of grief, only to turn in a flash to rip off his mask with an icy chortle and all but invite his photographer to pay tribute to his manipulations with a high-five. This evidence locks him into the cynic's end of the Lonelyhearts scale.

The nurse, Christine, is the woman in Anderson's life. They have met in the turmoil of the emergency room, where so many policemen and nurses begin their romances for natural reasons: because they see each other at their best in moments of mercy, are set apart by their shift work, and face a common condition in the Lonelyhearts syndrome. The match of reporter-and-nurse isn't working well, however, since Christine lives closer to the pole of madness. She gets wrapped up in her terminal patients, weeps at their peril, and wonders how Anderson can be so detached. "I am unconcerned," he concedes. "I'd go crazy if I let it all bother me." He'd like to see her show more sangfroid.

The cops are Martinez and Wilson. They are sources for Anderson in his running story on the shooting murder of a sixteen-year-old girl. It's a grisly killing, an execution with a .45, and neither the press nor the police can figure a motive for it. Martinez tries to clear his head with liquor and stewardesses; Wilson, as the father of a teenage daughter, is disturbed by the case and feels driven to find the killer and settle the score.

Katzenbach's soldier is the killer, a Vietnam veteran, and he enters the story with a string of phone calls to Anderson. "I'll tell you what this is," says the killer. "It's theater. It's a play. It's a chance for everyone, here in this well-lit city, to know a little of nighttime emptiness. Of nightmare." Thus, the killer pulls Anderson into his script. Speaking exclusively through the reporter's stories in the *Journal*, "the Numbers Killer" describes his killings as they occur and tries to justify them. As the sole media voice for the murderer, Anderson becomes a celebrity. Soon, the speed and pressure of events begin to crack the reporter, as he comes to identify not with the victims but with the killer. The Lonelyhearts scale has

suddenly turned into a circle: Anderson's cynicism is shown as a form of madness, the killer's madness takes a cynical shape.

At this point, however, Katzenbach sets the pot to boil. The critical terms in his story melt away into a climax fit for a made-for-TV movie. Abruptly, Anderson begins to make gross errors in judgment. They seem far more intended to propel the plot than to go on revealing him plausibly as a character. Still, you want to keep reading until they track down the guy with the gun.

What makes much of the story interesting is Katzenbach's treatment of Anderson. We get to know him just as he's rounding a standard turning point for young reporters. After three years on the *Journal*, and perhaps five years in the business, he's settling into the trade and moving, in a sense, from short-term enlistee to regular army. If he'd once thought of doing no more than a young man's tour in reporting, akin to a spell in the Peace Corps, then he's obviously no longer looking at his work this way. He'll make a career of it, or, more to the point, a life of it.

Accordingly, we can feel his sense of possibility narrowing, not so much to fit a slot in the newsroom (since his editors appear to be reasonable men), but to shrink into the confines of the newsman's sensibility. He's paying a moral price for his narrowness. He lies in his dealings with his sources and lets fabrications get into the paper. He is willing to cut corners, to strike the cheap but easy note, and to act on the rawest impulses of the news business. "No matter how many people this guy kills, no matter how sickening the crimes are, no matter how closely connected we are to the acts themselves, the paper will always pursue the story," Anderson says as a matter of fact. "We can't do anything else. We're not equipped to react like a responsible organization, like a bureaucracy or the police. Things happen, we write stories."

Malcolm Anderson slips into place beside Sally Field's character in *Absence of Malice* as yet another example of a new figure in the popular culture,

the ugly journalist. The two have more in common than a Miami newspaper job and the impulse to feel the wind in their hair and see their names on page one. Both characters are developed in such a way, I think, as to reveal the journalist as a person apart, as a figure without loyalties, without attachments, without even a sense of the ordinary moral touchstones in life. These portraits show reporters as isolated figures, moved only by the logic of expediency. Anderson is a fiction, but many reporters will be obliged to concede the truth in what he represents.

Grunts and groans

Live and Off-Color: News Biz

by Bob Teague

A & W Publishers. 288 pp. \$14.95

by JOHN O'CONNOR

The balance — or imbalance — between journalism and entertainment in television news has long been the subject of critical essays, learned and otherwise. What distinguishes Bob Teague's lively and informative putdown of local television news is that it comes straight, and hot, from the horse's mouth. For Teague is still an employee of New York's WNBC News, whose operations provide him with most of his object lessons in triviality, banality, and gimmicky packaging.

Why is Teague, as he himself puts it, committing hari kiri in print? He has his lofty reasons: "Because I believe in solid TV journalism and the awesome potential of this marvelous electronic medium. Because television news, as it is today, is a sort of schizophrenic prostitute — not the honest kind of whore I respect." Then there is his calculating side: "If I don't do it now — before the tube chews me up and spits me out as it has so many others — I will certainly have a credibility problem. I don't want anyone to dismiss what I have to say as just another case of sour grapes; you know, as if I were trying to get even with a lover who had rejected me."

John O'Connor is television/radio critic for The New York Times.

As must already be apparent, Teague is partial to sexual analogies. Among his chapter headings are "A Star Is Porn," "Doing It On Camera," "Instant Foreplay," "The Missionary Position." Several of his anecdotes list the alleged sex favors sought by male news executives from women applying for reporter jobs. Discreetly, only those women who refused are revealed by name.

Teague joined the WNBC organization in 1963, coming from a background in print journalism that included reporting for *The New York Times*. Having reached his nineteenth anniversary with WNBC, he is surely setting a fidelity-longevity record in a business that is notorious for its station-hopping, between and within cities. He was a weekend anchorman for a number of years but, he says, the job of reading somebody else's copy from a teleprompter proved boring and the odd, late-night hours destroyed his marriage. He claims to be far happier back on the street beat with his crew of dedicated "grunts," even though the pay is a good bit below the supposedly more glamorous anchor and special-feature levels.

As a reporter, Teague is understandably sensitive to the perceived failings of his immediate bosses — the produc-

ers, assistant producers, assignment editors, and other office functionaries who don't always see the obvious brilliance and importance of a submitted report. They keep insisting that the piece, however incredibly complicated, be stuffed into a time slot of one minute and forty-five seconds, if not shelved altogether. They are far more interested in pacing and attention spans than in journalistic considerations. As a group, they are acting as editors, the bane of reporters since the discovery of movable type. And television has had more than its fair share of incompetents in this category. Teague does a good job of explaining why, for instance, the often underrated position of assignment editor can be crucial in the typical TV news operation.

The bulk of Teague's scorn is reserved for the faceless legions who pass through the top executive suites. Seldom seen in the newsroom, they are the wielders of real power, creating tizzies of consternation with their constant, and often contradictory, suggestions about everything from lead stories to the anchorman's haircut. Teague refers to them as the Empty Suits toiling in the Golden Ghetto.

Even competent professionals, Teague writes, are trapped by the sys-

tem. He explains: "The devil makes them do it — the same devil who preys with equal ferocity on TV management everywhere. I'm talking about the force that compels them to sacrifice solid news reports for pieces of entertaining fluff, and to misuse our technology for meaningless live coverage of nonevents. The Ratings."

One of Teague's favorite targets is what he calls the Silly Live Remote (SLR). Technology has enabled television to create an extraordinary sense of immediacy in its coverage by going live to the scene of an event, whether it be the visit of an Egyptian president to Israel or the shooting of a pope. Some of the powers-that-be in executive corridors, however, have decided that the same sense of immediacy can be created for any story that uses a live remote. Newscasts are therefore clogged with shots of reporters standing at the deserted location of what had been the site of some earlier story. On St. Patrick's Day, for instance, WNBC opened the six o'clock portion of its evening news with anchorman Chuck Scarborough on a darkened Fifth Avenue informing us that the annual parade was indeed over and the streets were being cleaned. He then introduced reporter Ralph Penza, who stepped into live-camera view to introduce footage of the parade taped earlier in the day. Teague could hardly have made up a better example of an SLR.

In the end, Teague offers a few proposals of his own for improving, or at least arresting the disintegration of, the TV news picture. None of them is particularly convincing. Removing newscasts from the traditional ratings system is an old and stubbornly resisted idea. The fact is that news has become a key money-maker for local stations and ratings are still the major tools for setting advertising rates. That means that people who show some talent for amiable readings of weather reports or sports scores will continue to be courted for annual salaries of well over a quarter of a million dollars while grunts like Teague and the rest of us stand grumbling in the wings until somebody, perhaps in the brave new world of cable, takes our ideals seriously. ■

In Central Park, Teague interviews a young New Yorker about the city's poop-scoop law.



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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Gays and the press

TO THE REVIEW:

I am in a bind over Ransdell Pierson's "Up-tight on Gay News" (CJR, March/April). As a gay man, my immediate reaction is: Right on! As a journalist, I expected more from CJR.

I agree that gays should receive more and better coverage. I read three newspapers daily, the *Portland Press Herald*, *The Boston Globe*, and *The New York Times*. I am constantly aware of the usual absence of any gay material in all of them. I am also stunned by the realization that the otherwise provincial, lightweight *Press Herald* consistently does a better, fairer job reporting on local and national gay news than either the *Globe* or the *Times*.

But the problem is not just that a large group of people, self-defined as a community, is ignored. That's too self-righteously simplistic. Pierson misses an even more important point. By ignoring gay people, the press is practicing bad journalism. He cites the *Globe's* occasional features on gay people as a token victory. But here's what I find in my sampling of that paper:

■ A major series on the implications of new city council election districts (February 23-27) never noted that at least one of the districts is made up of neighborhoods with an obvious concentration of gay voters. I wonder if a gay council member will be the result. I know that any candidate for election from that district will have to court gay voters. The *Globe* isn't going to inform me on those issues. Despite many analyses of the effect of redistricting on racial and ethnic minorities and on their power bases, gays were never mentioned as a voting bloc in that series of articles. Even *The New York Times* gulped and ran a story about gay electoral power in Houston's last mayoral race. The *Globe* ignored this issue in its own backyard.

■ The *Globe* is fond of articles on gentrification. I waver between giggles and anger over the paper's description of the middle-class whites who are moving into run-down areas and are revitalizing old neighborhoods. No one can write a truthful story on the gentrification of American inner cities and not mention the enormous impact

of gay men. Just who does live in the South End? Doesn't the *Globe* realize that it is one of the largest and best-known gay ghettos in the country?

■ There's a very important story involved here that's not ever mentioned. While the *Globe* agonizes over racial tension in Boston, it ignores the festering antagonism between white gay men and the blacks who are being displaced by gentrification. When that explodes, the *Globe* and its readers will be unprepared.

And on and on it goes. My point is that by refusing to take gay people seriously the press is producing incomplete and often deceptive journalism. It is an insidious subterfuge undermining the whole of the media.

JOHN PRESTON
Former editor of *The Advocate*
Portland, Me.

TO THE REVIEW:

Ransdell Pierson suggests that gay reporters are afraid of losing their jobs if their sexual orientation becomes known. Is their fear justified?

Ironically, a day after reading Mr. Pierson's article, I read (*Gay Community News*, March 20) that Chris Madson, a veteran reporter with *The Christian Science Monitor*, had just been fired in Boston when her lesbian orientation was discovered. How sad. Since neither Boston nor Massachusetts has laws prohibiting such discrimination, the fired reporter will probably just have to accept this denial of her basic civil rights.

MIKE HUGHES
Seattle, Wash.

TO THE REVIEW:

I realize that Joe Nicholson ("Coming Out at the *New York Post*," CJR, March/April) was recalling an incident that happened more than ten years ago when he referred to an AP bureau chief reacting indignantly to a story on New York's homosexual community. To be fair to the AP, however, his comment warrants an update.

During my years as an AP reporter in the San Francisco bureau, from 1973 to 1979, I

wrote intermittently about the city's large gay community. Each story idea was met by my editors with complete cooperation. Story suggestions came not only from my colleagues in San Francisco, but also from the general desk in New York. I never hesitated to write about gays if the idea was newsworthy, and I found the editing of my pieces, both locally and in New York, to be first-rate in retaining the flavor and accuracy of the copy.

I know there are editors who allow personal biases to cloud their professional judgment. I never encountered them at AP.

TONY LEDWELL
San Francisco, Calif.

TO THE REVIEW:

As a gay reporter who writes on gay news topics, I have come to believe that the reluctance of editors to have openly gay staffers covering gay news topics will continue to be an issue so long as the question is cast in terms of prejudice on one side and "activism" on the other. Indisputably, those of us who are self-identified as gay are viewed as unable to be objective in news coverage, and that is the other side of the coin. The reality is not that we are less objective, but that we ask different questions than editors are used to dealing with. In any other area of reporting this would be characterized as expertise.

LARRY BUSH
Washington editor
The Advocate,
The New York Native
Washington, D.C.

TO THE REVIEW:

Congratulations on Ransdell Pierson's straightforward and helpful piece on the lack of gay coverage in the non-gay press. He verifies for everyone what many gay journalists (and readers) already know; I only wonder why this news was so long in coming.

One thing, though, may illustrate the power of the press (in this case, CJR) to effect change: in the caption to the photo of gay male and lesbian workers at *The Village*

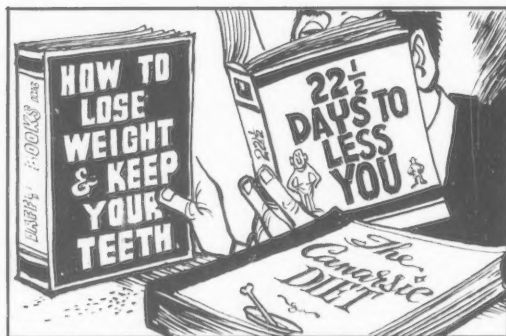
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well-balanced
diet is a key
to good
health, but...**



**what about
the millions of
food-faddists,
daffy-dieters,
junk-food kids
and gulp-&-
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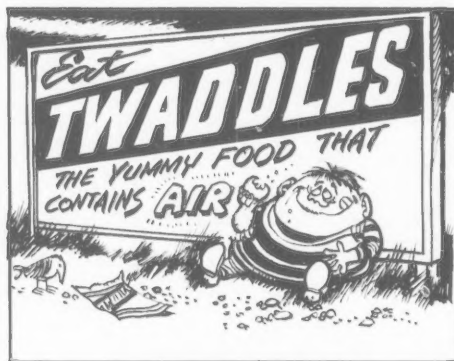
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Voice, Arthur Bell was quoted as saying, "I don't think there's one person in the closet at the *Voice*." That's not entirely true. At least two of those pictured came out, publicly, for the *CJR* photo, so it is disappointing that their bravery is not rewarded with caption identification. We are, standing left to right, Stuart Byron, Robert Massa, Richard Goldstein, Robert Buchholz, Jackie Rudin, Walter Kendrick, Sally German, Jim Farber, Don Shewey. Seated left to right, John Rommel, myself, Barbara Baracks, Vince Aletti, and George Delmerico. Critic Michael Feingold was regrettably out of town.

JEFF WEINSTEIN
Columnist
The Village Voice
New York, N.Y.

TO THE REVIEW:

Your cover article on the coverage of gay news by the het[erosexual] press was interesting and informative, but it neglected to mention the gay press. Consisting of more than 200 publications, the gay press is one of the largest and most flourishing minority presses in this country. From mimeographed organizational flyers to slick offset publications with international circulations, it serves a very real need, a need which the het press

rarely meets: the need to know about ourselves.

WALTER J. PHILLIPS
Vice president
Homosexuals Intransigent!
New York, N.Y.

TO THE REVIEW:

Either Ransdell Pierson is a less than thorough reporter or he deliberately settled on a bit of misinformation that suited his purpose.

He wrote that, "according to the paper's morgue," *The Miami Herald* failed to once mention a controversial (and anti-gay) rider to the state's appropriations bill from the time of the amendment's introduction April 24 until September 15.

In an admittedly cursory check after reading the *CJR* article, I found ten stories and two editorials from the *Herald* during that same period. The editorials, incidentally, opposed the amendment.

PETE WEITZEL
Deputy managing editor
The Miami Herald
Miami, Fla.

Ransdell Pierson replies: *I called the Herald's morgue on three different occasions*

to double-check and triple-check — under a variety of headings — the extent of that paper's coverage of the Trask-Bush amendment. In addition, I called Stephen K. Doit of the *Herald's* Tallahassee bureau, who twice reviewed his files and said he could find nothing.

TO THE REVIEW:

Ransdell Pierson's "Uptight on Gay News" blurs the fact that homosexuals are members of a community of choice. They therefore resemble ministers, psychiatrists, communists, "swingers," Nazis, and fascists more than they do blacks or women, to whom Pierson compares them. The latter are members of biologically-determined communities.

The homosexual movement has consciously been seeking to use the media to change public attitudes about itself. It has scores of publications of its own and has been seeking favorable presentation, of groups or individuals, in the various mass media. Portraying itself as an oppressed minority, like Jews and leftists, is one aspect of this struggle for acceptability.

The homosexual community, like other communities of choice, should indeed be covered objectively by the media. But ob-

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

jectivity does not mean the abandonment of morality — political, sexual, or any other kind. Proper coverage of sexual matters should recognize the existence in western societies of three distinct sexual ideals defining that sexual behavior considered "best." These are the connubial, the celibate, and the "comfortable," with advocates of the second and third never having ceased their respective efforts to improve the positions of their respective ideologies within society as a whole.

NATHANIEL S. LEHRMAN, M.D.
Deputy director, retired,
Brooklyn State Hospital
Roslyn, N.Y.

AIM darts laurel

TO THE REVIEW:

The award of a laurel (CJR, March/April) to Raymond Bonner and Alma Guillermoprieto for having transmitted to the readers of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, respectively, the story of a massacre at Mozote, El Salvador, given to them by the communist-armed guerrillas, is shocking.

The alleged massacre took place in mid-December. The locale was observed by Bonner and Guillermoprieto in early January. The two stories were delayed for publication until the end of January, when they ran just before the president announced that he was certifying El Salvador as eligible for continued aid.

These stories were the product of a carefully orchestrated propaganda exercise by the guerrillas. According to the State Department, the number reported killed was two to three times the population of the village. State Department investigators could find no evidence of the massacre reported by the two reporters. They did find that an armed confrontation between the guerrillas and the army had taken place at Mozote.

The stories had been severely challenged in a lengthy editorial in *The Wall Street Journal* of February 10 and in the AIM Report. The criticisms have not been answered by the reporters or their papers. You would serve your readers better by reporting both sides, rather than by blindly praising stories that, for all you know, were as much fabrications as Janet Cooke's "Jimmy" or Christopher Jones's visit to Cambodia.

REED J. IRVINE
Chairman of the board
Accuracy in Media, Inc.
Washington, D.C.

Editors' Note: The questions raised by Mr. Irvine are dealt with in "A Political Press?" on page 20 of this issue.

Tribute seconded

TO THE REVIEW:

As the second editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review*, I want to second the tribute my predecessor, Jim Boylan, paid to Ed Barrett in "Unlikely Event" (CJR, March/April).

If he is remembered for nothing else in journalistic history (which is unthinkable), Ed will be recorded as the inventor of the modern journalism review. He institutionalized what A. J. Liebling practiced so brilliantly as an individual. It was Ed's vision, conviction, persistence, and administrative and fund-raising gifts that gave life and maturity to a fragile embryo.

All of us dedicated to improving journalism and defending its freedom are in Ed Barrett's debt.

ALFRED BALK
Editor and publisher
World Press Review
New York, NY

The case of the snub-nosed laurel

TO THE REVIEW:

In your laurel to the Cox papers on the series "Snub-Nosed Killers" (CJR, January/February), you ended with a statement that these guns had "no obvious legitimate use to anyone else" (other than criminals).

The only thing obvious is that you are completely wrong. Protecting my hide is both an obvious and legitimate use. In these days of a crumbling criminal justice system, there is little choice but to try to protect yourself. Courts do little to discourage crime, and there will never be enough policemen to do it.

The short-barreled pistol is about the best thing going to provide personal protection. I was out shopping for one today. It is unobtrusive and will stop a criminal. You can put it in your pocket out of sight unless you need it. This is important even if you are just carrying it to the car. If you stroll out with a giant .44 Magnum sticking out of your belt, your neighbors might get upset. The low-key approach is the best.

R. LAMAR SMITH
Atlanta, Ga.

Capital error?

TO THE REVIEW:

One advantage in maligning the foreign reporters working in Washington is that most of your readers do not see their reports and cannot, therefore, judge the accuracy of C. T. Hanson's allegations ("The No-Leak Beat," CJR, January/February).

continued

COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

Puerto Rico gets things done for Atari

"We're feeling very good about Puerto Rico. We'll be expanding there."

Raymond E. Kassir,
Chairman/CEO, Atari

"The Puerto Rican government has given us excellent cooperation. They're very pro-business."

Atari, a division of Warner Communications, manufactures 43 "game" cartridges for its Video Computer System in Puerto Rico. The company opened its doors in April, 1981, and has already



doubled its manufacturing area.

"The work force in Puerto Rico has the same attitude as the government.

They care about what we're doing. They helped us reach certain productivity levels earlier than we projected. And the quality is A-One.

"Puerto Rico's geographic location has been a major benefit.

While we manufacture the same products in El Paso and San Mateo, we get better access to the Eastern Seaboard, Europe and South America from Puerto Rico.

"Yes we were interested in the tax incentive. But you can't run a business on a tax consideration - at least we don't. The government attitude, the geography, the work force - everything's working in Puerto Rico's favor."

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THE TERRIBLE COST OF UNION VIOLENCE



Larry Crawford had heard the insults, the racial slurs and the death threats before as he crossed the picket line. After all, the strike at Virginia Lime Co. near Pearisburg, Va. had been going on for months. But the strikers were growing more vicious in their language every day. And were those insults, slurs and threats really "just" words?

The verbal assaults on Larry were taking their toll. He couldn't sleep at night. He was nervous, irritable and often depressed. Nothing seemed to improve his appetite or make his crushing headaches go away. Psychiatrists call it "traumatic stress reaction." Men at war call it "combat fatigue."

And then on a cold February day, one of Larry's non-striking co-workers learned what it was like to be shot at. A shotgun blast tore into his car. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

But Larry Crawford realized the same thing could happen to him,



Charles Eaves

to his wife and child. And all because local members of the United Steel Workers refused to accept Larry's right, his need, to work.

With the help of the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, Larry and eight co-workers, including Charles Eaves and Raleigh Newby, fought back. Within the law. The strikers were hauled into court and held accountable for conduct later called "vile and degrading" by the judge.

Justice was served in Giles County Circuit Court. Larry and his eight co-workers received a judgement of \$99,000 in damages for physical and verbal attacks suffered during the 18-month strike.

But the strikers are expected to appeal their case, which is likely to go all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Compulsory union dues will pay for their lawyers. High-powered research staffs will seek out every legal loophole to postpone the day when Larry Crawford, Charles Eaves, Raleigh Newby and their families can sleep soundly at night.

The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation is helping everyone it can. Currently, some 250 cases involving protection from union violence, illegal union political spending, academic and political freedom and other basic employee rights are being prepared or brought before courts across the nation.



Raleigh Newby

For information on how you can help Larry Crawford and his family, write us. We'd like to hear from you today. And so would the Crawford family.

National Right to Work Legal
Defense Foundation
Dept. CJR
8001 Braddock Road
Springfield, VA 22160

The claim that *The Guardian* was caught short by my heavy reliance on *The Washington Post* and ran an inaccurate prediction of the MX missile-basing decision is rubbish, since the paper ran no such report.

What I wrote was an account of the leaks about the decision which had appeared not only in *The Washington Post* but in the *Los Angeles Times* and in television reports. I also quoted Defense Secretary Weinberger's charge that much of the detail in the American stories was inaccurate.

The point, apparently missed by Hanson, is that leaks are a significant aspect of the American political process and, as such, need to be reported by any diligent foreign correspondent. How else could readers overseas subsequently understand the establishment of the Nixon plumbers' unit or President Reagan's recent action to block unauthorized disclosures?

HAROLD JACKSON
Chief U.S. correspondent
The Guardian
Washington, D.C.

C. T. Hanson replies: *Mr. Jackson's report was not about leaks, it was about the MX, and thus was headlined REAGAN TO BASE MISSILES IN DESERT. Had it been about "unauthorized disclosures," plumbers, and so*

on, it would presumably have been headlined REAGAN MISSILE POLICY BEDEVILED BY LEAKS or words to that effect.

Significantly, The Guardian did not trumpet the Post's gossip item about Jimmy Carter "bugging" Reagan in Blair House. If Mr. Jackson is really so concerned about telling the British public of American leaks, he would presumably have given the "bugging" story as much attention as the MX story. His pattern of selection suggests that he chooses to echo those American reports to which he gives some credence.

My point is not that foreign reporters in Washington deserve to be maligned, but that they work under handicaps not shared by domestic reporters (i.e., a no-leak beat), and resort to various techniques — some less justifiable than others — to overcome these handicaps. American reporters in London rely on British papers in much the same way that foreign reporters in Washington rely on American papers.

The foreign reporter faces a dilemma. If he repeats a domestic news report that proves false, he is caught short. But if he refuses to repeat a domestic report that proves true, he is also caught short. This is why he wishes devoutly, though usually in vain, for "unauthorized disclosures" to come his way.

Critics vs. Chron (cont'd)

TO THE REVIEW:

Richard Reinhardt's "Doesn't Everybody Hate the Chronicle?" (CJR, January/February) is great parody, but I doubt if that was the professor's intent. The story, like its subject, is well-written, amusing, frothy, to the extent that whatever point he was trying to make was lost.

Reinhardt argues that the paper is unfairly demeaned by both readers and critics — and tries to prove that everyone else is wrong. I will give him one point: the *Chronicle* has a good staff, far better than it deserves. The reluctance of its editors to use those reporters is a tragedy for those staffers, an insult to readers. The paper does have an interesting habit of sending columnists to cover news events, however.

The real lesson here is how marketing peculiarities of the newspaper trade have gotten us to the point where the traditional measures of excellence — solid local coverage, investigative reports, commitment to the betterment of the community — are no longer reflected in circulation figures.

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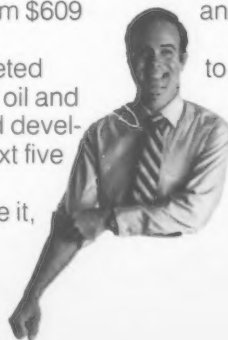
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A Flight of Graciousness.

wire services such as the New York Times and the Washington Post-Los Angeles Times services. The *Chronicle* isn't written; it's packaged, pre-processed junk-food journalism — for breakfast.

Reinhardt dismisses the evening *San Francisco Examiner*, but fails to note that, within the city, the circulation figures are equal. And he fails to mention that we of the *Examiner* are out there doing all those "dull" traditional things — poking, prodding, prying. When we look over our shoulder the *Chronicle* is rarely there.

PAUL SHINOFF
Labor writer
San Francisco Examiner
San Francisco, Calif.

TO THE REVIEW:

Richard Reinhardt's review of *San Francisco's* improbable top daily was lively and enlightening. But I feel obliged to note one error, which came as a special surprise after the *Review's* extensive past coverage of joint operating arrangements. The *Chronicle* and *Examiner* did not join in 1964 "under the protection of . . . the Failing Newspaper Act," as Reinhardt reports. That law, eventually retitled the Newspaper Preservation Act in a model of legislative euphemism, was introduced in 1969 and passed in 1970, after the Supreme Court found a similar arrangement in Tucson in antitrust violation. Prior arrangements, in San Francisco and twenty-one other cities, were grandfathered-in by the act under a looser standard than that set for future ones.

ERIC SCIGLIANO
Free-lance writer
Seattle, Wash.

Stockman's confessions

TO THE REVIEW:

Chris Welles is on target in identifying the "woefully anemic state of much economic reporting in this country" (Comment, "Scooped by Stockman," *CJR*, January/February). One wonders, however, if closer scrutiny of the numbers alone, in the tradition of investigative journalism, will be enough for the popular press to avoid being voodooed by a future variation of Reaganomics.

Until more reporters take a hard look at the theoretical assumptions that determine even their independently arrived-at conclusions about the economy, I see little hope for improvement.

The socialist press was not fooled by Reaganomics. When, in March 1981, *Newsweek* was suggesting that supply-side economics was just the "unconventional solution" the times required, the editors of

Monthly Review called it for what it is: a throwback to the pre-Keynesian notion, ultimately discredited by the experience of the Depression, that diverting vast sums of money to corporations and wealthy individuals will somehow result in an automatic increase in investment and production.

Let us hope that the legacy of Mr. Stockman's confessions, so embarrassing to the popular press, will be a new willingness to examine real alternatives in economic analysis.

DAVID S. WHITFORD
New York, N.Y.

Food feud revisited

TO THE REVIEW:

Both in her article "Food Pages: Is the Heyday Over?" (*CJR*, January/February) and in her reply to Nancy Pappas's letter (*Unfinished Business*, *CJR*, March/April), Goody Solomon made some rather significant errors regarding Searle's new sweetener, aspartame. She implies that the industry (presumably Searle) provided "one-sided stories." While Ms. Solomon levels criticism at Nancy Pappas for not mentioning that the Public Board of Inquiry had recommended to the FDA that further safety tests be conducted, she fails to mention that 112 safety tests had been done, that the World Health Organization and twelve countries had approved the product, and that, as reported in *Science* magazine in August 1981, two of the three members of the board of inquiry reversed their position after reviewing Searle's supplemental submission.

Talk about one-sided reporting!

RICHARD L. MCGRAW
Vice president, public affairs
G. D. Searle & Co.
Chicago, Ill.

Goody L. Solomon replies: *Mr. McGraw misses the point. The artificial sweetener aspartame was mentioned in my article to demonstrate that when the government approves a new product, and when, during the review process, scientists voice concern about its safety, the press has the responsibility to report those concerns.*

A spate of ombudsmen

TO THE REVIEW:

The *Review's* retiring publisher apparently suffers from the New York disease of not looking beyond the Hudson when he says (Publisher's Notes, *CJR*, January/February) that the "trend toward ombudsmen on newspapers seems to be abating. . . ."

As members of the Organization of Newspaper Ombudsmen know, twenty-five or

twenty-six newspapers in the United States have active ombudsman programs. This is up from about fifteen or sixteen in the past year. Though hardly a wave of appointments, this is a trickle that seems to be growing, not a trend that is abating.

ALFRED JACOBY
President, Organization of Newspaper Ombudsmen, and assistant to the editor/readers' representative, *The San Diego Union*
San Diego, Calif.

Model journalism

TO THE REVIEW:

The Lord be praised for Ms. Prager's piece on the "Generation Gap in San Jose" (*CJR*, March/April). Every "senior" or "veteran" reporter in the republic should be grateful for her reportage on this subject.

R. CLINTON TAPLIN
Nanuet, N.Y.

TO THE REVIEW:

Knight-Ridder is no easy target for journalism critics, but is that any reason to turn its main virtue into a sin?

The complaints aired by Deborah Prager boil down to an accusation that the company is a meritocracy — i.e., an organization that rewards its good performers at the expense of the not-so-good.

Does anyone have a better model? On what basis should newspaper people be rewarded? Kinship ties? Longevity? Political attitudes? Friendship networks? There are plenty of newspaper companies that follow those alternative standards, and they provide most of the grist for real criticism. Anyone who believes that an organization can create consistent, high-quality newspapers and not be a meritocracy also believes in alchemy, perpetual motion, and the free lunch.

PHILIP MEYER
Professor, School of Journalism
The University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, N.C.

Correction

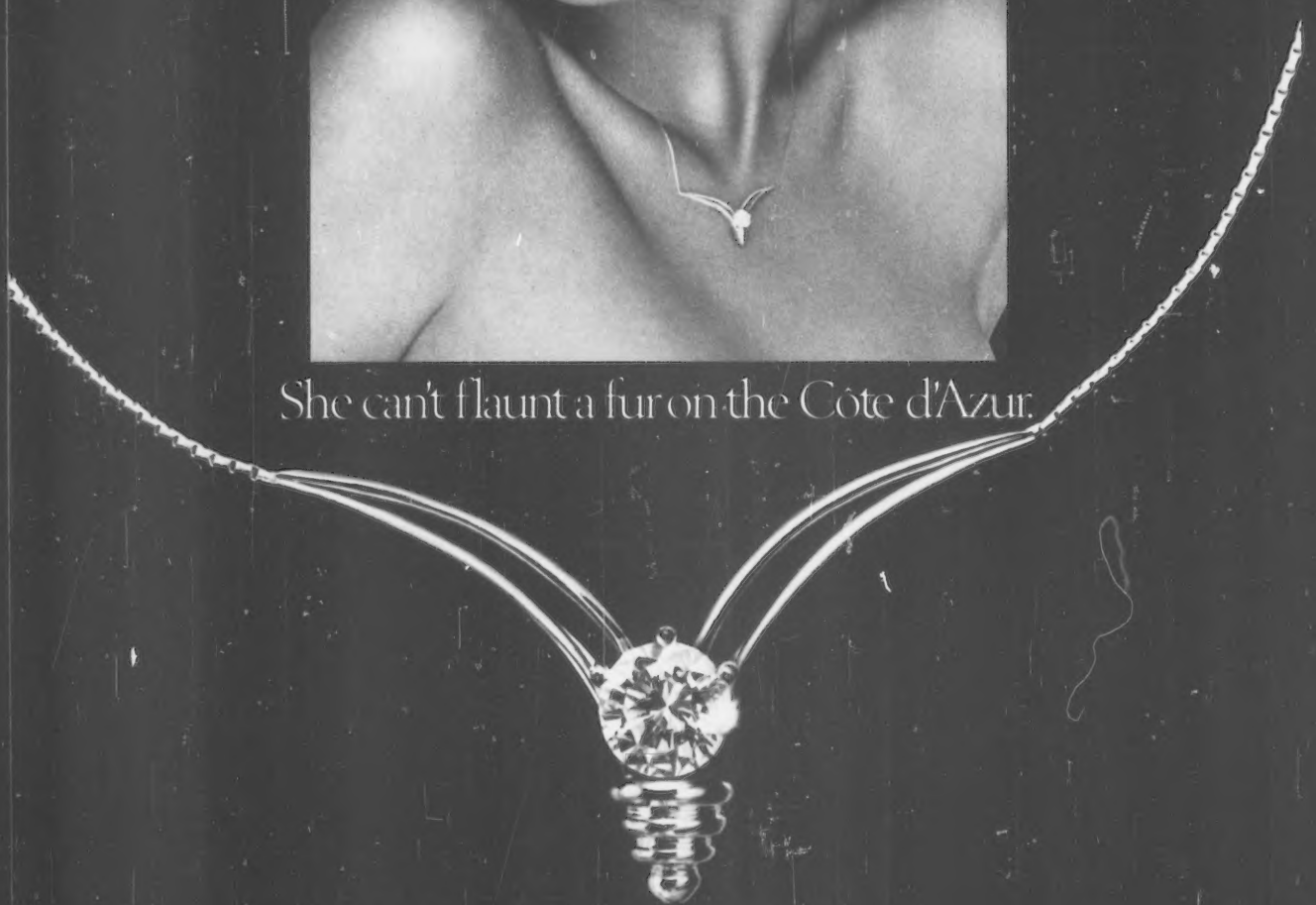
In the March/April issue, a "Lower case" item attributed to the *Morning Call* incorrectly placed the paper in Easton, Pennsylvania. The *Call* is in fact located in Allentown.

Deadline

The editors welcome and encourage letters from readers. To be considered for publication in the July/August issue, letters to the *Review* should be received by May 20. Letters are subject to editing for clarity and space.



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BRIEFINGS

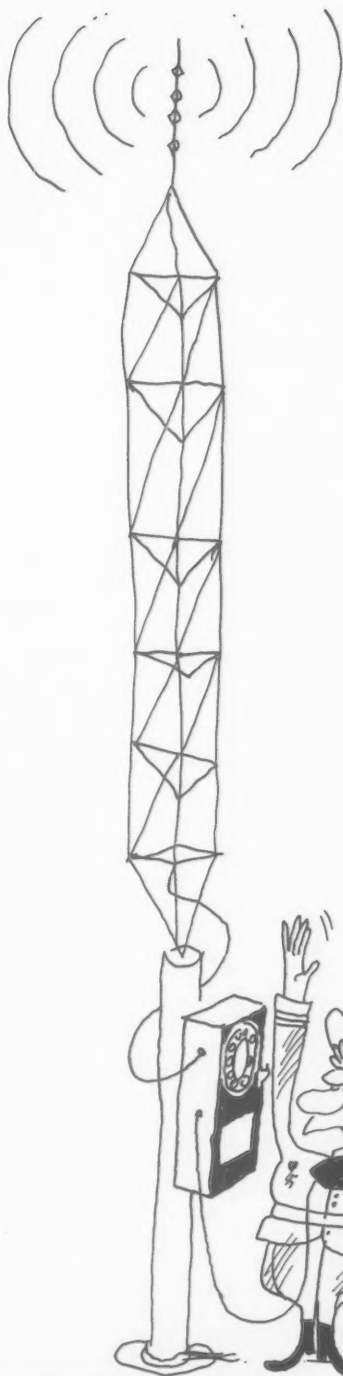
Wrong number

Racial and Religious Bias on Radio Call-in Programs, by Dennis T. Lowry, American Jewish Committee, 1981

In the broad spectrum of human communication, the radio call-in show is on a wave length all its own. Originally developed for shut-ins, insomniacs, and late-night listeners, the format has achieved a degree of popular success that commands respectful attention not only from station managers and advertisers but from social observers as well. It requires no profound insight, of course, to recognize that the genre provides a medium in which the basic need for social connection can be met in a peculiarly contemporary way; what is far less clear is the nature and the function of the messages these shows transmit. Obvious, oversimplified, and egocentric as call-in conversation often is, it has much the same hypnotic appeal to listeners as yesterday's party line, and generally seems to be just as harmless. But is it?

The question is a crucial one. For as local call-in shows have continued to expand — they are now aired round the clock and attract audiences in the tens of millions — so too has their range of subjects; and whether by the design of hosts with eyes on ratings or by the accident of listeners with raised awareness, topics have tended to be increasingly controversial. All of which would be well and good — and unquestionably in the public interest — were it not for the fact that, along with the airing of personal opinions on controversial issues, there has come an unabashed airing of personal invective aimed at particular racial, religious, and ethnic groups. This independent study examines that distasteful aspect of the radio call-in phenomenon.

Commissioned by the American Jewish Committee after it had received a number of complaints of such instances, and conducted by a professor of communications at Temple University, the study is based on a content analysis of call-in programs on three Philadelphia radio stations — WDAS, WWDB-FM, and WHAT — during several randomly selected sample periods in the summer of 1980. Applying generally ac-



cepted social science techniques, monitors evaluated as favorable and unfavorable the verbal assertions made by callers about twelve particular groups, including whites, blacks, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Christians, and welfare recipients. (References to "niggers," "spics," "white racists," "Jewish conspiracy," "the enemies, white policemen," "fanatic fundamentalists," and "welfare pimps," for example, were rated as negative statements; "fully qualified black professionals," and "I was proud of our black and white councilmen" were rated as positive ones.) Among the findings: on all three stations, the overall orientation was negative, with a total of 741 negative assertions to 86 positive ones, or 8.6 negative statements for every positive one; each station, moreover, reflected its own favorite brand of bias. The dubious distinction of most negative score went to WWDB-FM, with 408 negative statements out of a total of 420, or 97 percent. (When calculated on an hourly basis, however, the author notes, the hands-down winner in negativism was WDAS, with 10.3 such remarks per hour.) Of the twelve target groups under review, the largest number of destructive and critical attacks was directed at Protestants — specifically, the conservative wing of Protestantism, including

CJR/Niculae Asci

evangelicals, fundamentalists, and so on — and at blacks: the two groups received virtually identical scores of 196 and 195 negative assertions, respectively.

One of the most striking aspects of Lowry's analysis centers on the role of the call-in show host, who often leads the way in making negative assertions himself; Lowry notes, for example, that it was WWDB-FM's host who was primarily responsible for the station's negative showing in comments about Protestants and Cubans. And, as the verbatim transcript of a typical WWDB call-in discussion makes abundantly clear, hosts are not above intentionally baiting their callers to provoke statements of hate ("What do you think of the philosophy . . . of Adolph Hitler?" prompted one host, egging on a caller who had asserted a belief in the mental inferiority of blacks). It is a practice, Lowry suggests, that probably promotes audience interest and station profits — and the legitimization of bigotry, too.

Can anything be done? Should it? Lowry answers yes to both questions, urging stations and program hosts toward responsible self-regulation with the help of active panels of citizen advisers. At the heart of his argument, however, is the National Association of Broadcasters' code, which he would like to see strengthened to make the baiting of hate callers by call-in hosts professionally unacceptable. Even in its present form, he points out, the code states that telephone participation programs should be governed by standards of ethical journalism; that news journalism should be fair and without bias; and that controversial public issues should give fair representation to opposing sides of issues. Can the use of the public airwaves to defame certain groups in society, he asks challengingly, be seriously regarded as "broadcasting in the public interest?"

Caribbean romance

Covering the Sandinistas, by Shirley Christian, Washington Journalism Review, March 1982

As the chorus of complaints about coverage of El Salvador grows louder and nastier (see "A Political Press?" page 20), this retrospective assessment of the reporting on the 1978-1979 civil war in Nicaragua is of more than academic interest. Christian, a Latin American correspondent for *The Miami Herald* who won the Pulitzer Prize for international reporting in 1981, is troubled by the recent course of events in Nicaragua — the jailing of critics, the periodic closings of *La Prensa*, the continuing state of disruption —



since the Sandinista Front and its legendary interior minister, Tomas Borge, came to power; she is particularly dismayed by the American press's failure during the insurrection to pay proper attention to Borge and the Sandinistas' Marxist ideology — in short, to see and to report on what was coming. How did such a crucial aspect of the Nicaragua story get missed? In what she describes as a soul-searching effort to understand her own work as well as that of her colleagues, Christian examined hundred of stories that appeared on CBS and in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* during the period from January 1, 1978, when Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, publisher of *La Prensa*, was assassinated, and July 21, 1979, when the Sandinistas took over. (Christian herself was not assigned to Nicaragua until after this period, but, she says, she doubts that she would have handled things differently had she been there.)

The key to understanding the press's blindness to the nature of the Sandinistas, Christian believes, was its hatred for Somoza, who, notwithstanding his extraordinary accessibility to newsmen, was devoutly despised by them for the corrupt and brutal way he ran the country. Given this feeling (which was intensified by the killing of ABC's Bill Stewart in June 1979), journalists were inclined — and, according to Christian, they all now publicly or privately admit they were inclined — to view Somoza's opponents "through a romantic haze." Citing segments on CBS by Chuck Gomez and articles in *The New York Times* by Alan Riding and in *The Washington Post* by Karen De Young, Christian notes the consistently reassuring impression conveyed of a moderate alliance willing to work together in a pluralistic, democratic government. It was not, she stresses, that the journalists were

willfully misleading the American public, but rather that so many of the sources they relied on turned out to be part of a hopeful, non-Marxist, conservative or moderate opposition — business leaders, politicians, intellectuals, and professionals, most of whom, tellingly, have since broken with the government or left the country.

By way of example, Christian points to the reporting on Eden Pastora, or "Commander Zero," the charismatic guerrilla commander who was invariably portrayed in news accounts as their top leader — but who, in fact, as a non-Marxist, conservative Roman Catholic, had very little power and is today in exile. Can it be, Christian wonders, that people like Pastora are put out in front precisely because they seem so respectable to the West?

She ponders other questions, too. How, for instance, to account for such a dearth of stories about possible noncombat brutality by the Sandinista forces against government supporters? Further: Was the reign of terror in Nicaragua really any different from any other war — except that reporters could witness it in vivid geographic and cultural proximity and without the usual barriers of wartime censorship? And finally: Where were the investigations of the highly relevant question of where the Sandinistas were getting their arms and ammunition?

The American media missed the real stories in Nicaragua, Christian concludes, because while they were covering the revolution there, they were on a media trip of their own — a trip marked by guilt over decades of U.S. mistakes in Central America; by the conviction — a legacy from Vietnam — that U.S. foreign policy was not to be trusted; and by the delight in telling a story in which, once again, the U.S. had been proved wrong. Whether the U.S. government is now



CJRNiculae Asciu

delighted that the press has been proved wrong, Christian does not say; nor does it matter, for as her unblinking analysis shows, neither institution has a monopoly on blind spots.

Criminal neglect

Newspaper Reporting of U.S. Business Crime in 1980, by James R. Bennett, *Newspaper Research Journal*, October 1981

Beset, bothered, and beleaguered by a hostile press — that is the role in which corporate America has cast itself lately and seems to be playing with considerable relish (see "Business and the Media," Briefings, January/February). But is its underdog act really true to life? Bennett, a professor of English and humanities at the University of Arkansas, decided to test the image against the reality of print — the coverage by newspapers and newsweeklies of a dozen instances of alleged corporate misdeeds in 1980, ranging from bribery and deception to knowingly manufacturing defective products and dumping toxic wastes.

Item: In reporting on New York's \$635-million suit against Hooker Chemical/ Occidental Petroleum for the contamination of Love Canal, almost all of the publications surveyed focused on criticism of government delays, downplaying the corporations' history of past unethical behavior and their efforts to conceal the truth from endangered residents. Item: When General Electric was indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of scheming to bribe a Puerto Rican official to secure a contract for a new power plant, only eight out of the fourteen papers surveyed reported it, and none on page 1; similarly, only eight of those fourteen papers reported

Bethlehem Steel's admission in court that it had paid \$400,000 in bribes to get business for its ship-repair yards. Item: The potential landmark trial of the Ford Motor Company — in which the company was charged with three counts of reckless homicide in connection with the deaths of three girls in a 1973 Pinto explosion — got scant attention: out of thirty-six editions of thirteen papers scattered around the country, only nine ran articles about the trial, none of which was on page 1; in significant contrast, however, the eventual verdict that Ford was innocent was reported by *all* of those same papers, ten of which put the story on page 1. Item: Of fourteen papers inspected, only three reported the story of Senator Howard Metzenbaum's petition to the federal Energy Regulatory Commission to change an earlier ruling that he said had allowed Texaco to gain a \$400-million windfall from unlawful diversion of public natural gas. Item: A congressional report that American consumers had been overcharged more than \$2 billion for oil products during the preceding two years was reported by only four out of seven papers. Item: When, after thousands of complaints to the FTC, Mobil agreed to stop advertising a motor oil as cutting oil consumption when in fact it actually



CJRNiculae Asciu

increases it in some cars, only four of twelve newspapers examined reported the story, and their accounts were brief and buried in back pages.

And so it goes: a consistent pattern by newspapers and newsmagazines in which news of corporate malfeasance is downplayed, understated, or just plain left out. Judging from these studies, big business can relax: the press is a pussycat, even if it is not quite an underdog's best friend.

Gloria Cooper

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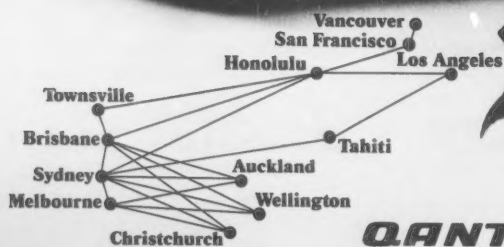
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The Lower case



Gasoline price war comes to Portland

The (Portland) Oregonian 2/3/82

Haig Insists Soviets Use Chemicals

Sarasota (Fla.) Herald-Tribune 2/15/82

Fed Plans to Ease Monetary Policy, Urges Deficit Cuts

The Washington Post 2/11/82 Early edition

Federal Reserve Sees Continued Restraint On Supply of Money

The Washington Post 2/11/82 Final edition

Fire officials grilled over kerosene heaters

The News Journal, Wilmington, Del. 2/27/82

Reader is upset over dog eating Filipinos

The Wayne County Outlook (Monticello, Ky.) 2/25/82

6 found slain in Miami; missing toddler sought

Minneapolis Tribune 11/30/81

N.Y. nun still in coma but improves after being beaten on eve of holiday

The San Juan (P.R.) Star 12/26/81

More appealing property taxes in Portland area

The (Portland) Oregonian 2/20/82

Youths steal funds for charity

The Reporter Dispatch, White Plains, N.Y. 2/17/82

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cares about
transit riders**

**WE RIDE
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DEATH LINE**

PAGE TWO



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PAGE 16



Consumer Orientation
No. 18 in a Series
Subject: Model Updating
Keeping the 911
Forever Young.

18

Porsche 911

Every new Porsche 911 built today has the same basic design-concept as the first 911—built 18 years ago.

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